

SCIENCE
DEMOCRACY
AND
ISLAM

and other essays

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PREFACE

THE eight essays collected in this volume have been written at different times and for different purposes. They deal with different, if connected problems and have, it is hoped, an underlying unity of outlook. How far this hope is justified is for the reader to judge.

Of these essays, three—*The Concept of Democracy*, *The Rights of Man and East and the Problems of Education*—were written in response to requests by Unesco and published by it. I am grateful to Dr. Luther H. Evans, Director-General of Unesco, for his ready consent to the inclusion of these essays in the present volume. I would also like to thank Messrs. Allen & Unwin Ltd., for their consent to the publication of two essays—*Science, Democracy and Islam* and *Freedom, Authority and Imagination*—from books published by them.

The three other essays have not been published in book form before, though two form part of the proceedings of the Indian Philosophical Congress. *The Study of Philosophy* was a sectional Chairman's paper at its Silver Jubilee Session. *The Welfare State* was the General President's address to the Congress at its last session held in Ceylon. *Gandhian Thought and Practice* is based on a paper presented to an international seminar on the study of methods and techniques used by Mahatma Gandhi in dealing with internal and international problems.

These essays have all been written in response to specific requests but the problems with which they deal have, I believe, a permanent and universal interest. I am thankful to the organizations or individuals whose invitation provided me with the occasion to record some thoughts on them, for I doubt if otherwise the distractions of administrative work would have permitted me to attempt the task.

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SCIENCE, DEMOCRACY AND ISLAM

THREE concepts are basic to the growth of Science. First, there must be the belief that the universe is one homogeneous whole and not divided into realms with divergent laws. Second, there must be the belief that laws of nature are uniform and not subject to change or mutation. Third, there must be an equally insistent belief in the value of the individual instance. If any of these conditions is missing, there can be no general scientific progress even though there may still be individual instances of great scientists.

The first and second concepts are clearly inter-related and may, in fact, be regarded as two facets of the same fact. Without a monistic universe there can be no universal law. If there were two or more worlds, their plurality would be based on distinction, and they would be distinct only in so far as they were governed by different laws. Universality of law, therefore, depends on the uniformity of the universe. Laws of nature cannot be uniform unless the nature they seek to express is itself uniform.

Belief in the uniformity of nature can be violated in one of the two following ways. If the universe is regarded as the realm of different and perhaps rival gods who challenge one another's authority, it is obvious that there can be no uniform laws governing its entire expanse. The uniformity of nature would again break down if a distinction is recognized between the natural and the supernatural. If they are distinct regions, there must obviously be different laws in the two realms. Insistence on 'One World' is, therefore, an essential condition for the growth of scientific thought.

This conception of the unity of nature first expresses itself in religious faith. Most of the earlier religions recognized rival gods who held sway over distinct regions. Thus there was the god of the mountains, the god of the woodlands and the god of the sea.

The Old Testament shows traces of early modes of thought when its prophets appeal to the 'God of our fathers' and seek His help in overcoming the gods of others. In course of time, the multitudes of gods were replaced by the concept of one God, a Supreme Being who is unique and Lord of all creation. All religions show a tendency of moving from the conception of many gods to that of one God, but nowhere is this so marked as in the case of the Semitic religions which originated in desert lands. Nor is this surprising. The desert with its vast brooding skies and the vast unbroken expanse of the plains below naturally impresses upon the mind a sense of the unity of the universe. All distinctions tend to be blurred in the desert and we have the overpowering sense of a Presence in which all individuality is lost.

One God meant one universe and therefore one law. Belief in the unity of Godhead was, therefore, one of the conditions for the emergence of Science, but by itself it was not enough. In the earlier Semitic religions, this sense of the unity of God did not overcome the distinction between the phenomenal and the transcendental. This is seen in their emphasis on the value of the miracle. The essence of a miracle is that it is against the general run of the law. Recognition of a miracle, is, therefore, a denial of the uniformity of nature and is evidence of reliance on faith rather than reason.

Both Christian and Jewish thought accepted miracles and supernatural manifestations of power as essential ingredients of religious faith. Their prophets were extraordinary men who commanded extraordinary devotion by their extraordinary deeds. They were not only holy men but men possessed of superhuman vision. They claimed that they had insight into the unseen world and could, in the light of that insight, influence the course of events in the seen world. The fact that such deeds were extraordinary and required departure from the natural law was further evidence of their supernatural gifts and status.

Such an attitude of mind may be conducive to the growth of religious fervour but it cannot help in the evolution of a scientific temper. We no doubt say that there are exceptions to every law,

but a scientist cannot rest until he has found an explanation for the seeming exception. In fact, Science owes its advance to the observation of some instance which seems to be an exception, but on a closer scrutiny proves to be the manifestation of a wider and more general law which supersedes the first.

Belief in the unfailing uniformity of nature is thus an essential condition of the growth of Science. Science does not, therefore, permit the incursion of the individual to break the chain of causality. Nor can it permit the intrusion of supernatural factors which are not amenable to human reason. The unity of nature, therefore, must apply not only to the entire known world but also to the world which is yet unknown. In fact, the generality of a scientific law is itself a claim that it will apply to observed as well as to all hitherto unobserved cases.

Even the conception of a uniform world in which there is no distinction of natural and supernatural is not, however, enough. There must be an equal emphasis on the value of the individual or the single instance. If the conception of uniformity of nature were enough, Science would have developed as soon as there was a belief in the unity of God. In that case, Science would have been a theoretical discipline in which conclusions would be derived deductively from certain general premises. Science is, however, essentially inductive.

The formulation of general principles has not by itself led to the progress of Science. It is only when general principles have been wedded to brute facts, or in the alternative, the observation of a number of instances has led to the formulation of a general theory, that there has been scientific advance. The empirical had to acquire a new dignity before Science could emerge. Man's attention had to turn from the consideration of unearthly glory to the contemplation of the familiar world, from speculation on transcendental and logical truths to the observation of the variety and grandeur of the perceptible world.

The importance of the individual to the growth of scientific thought is also seen in the constant demand for the verification of every general law. This is what constitutes the essence of the

inductive or experimental method. Deductive thought is content to develop the implications of a concept in disregard of all considerations except that of inner consistency. Inductive thought confronts the concept with experience. Since concepts must from their very nature be general while experience is always experience of the particular, the essence of verification is the reference of general principles to particular facts. Consideration of the individual instance, therefore, becomes essential for the progress of Science.

Without this constant challenge of the single instance, the value of experience as the basis of all knowledge would be lost. A new gulf would thus be created between the rational and the empirical. If all knowledge could be built from certain fundamental truths, we would, by a devious route, come back to the position where the truths of reason would be distinct from the truths of fact. The distinction between the natural and the supernatural must be overcome before there can be the beginning of Science. We must similarly bridge the distinction between the rational and the empirical in order to ensure the progress of Science.

These three conditions, namely the unity of nature, the denial of any distinction between the natural and the supernatural, and the recognition of the value of the individual are, therefore, essential conditions for the growth of Science. If any one of these factors is missing, one of the essential ingredients for the scientific temper would be absent. In such context, men of extraordinary genius may anticipate some of the findings of later science, but there will be no general scientific advance. This has, in fact, been the case till about the beginnings of the present millennium. There have been brilliant scientists and speculators in ancient India, China, Egypt and Greece, but like solitary stars in the firmament they shone in splendid isolation.

II

The present millennium is pre-eminently the age of Science. It is also the period which has seen the greatest advance in demo-

cratic ideals. The parallelism between the progress of Science and democracy is not accidental. From the homogeneity and unity of the world follows the universal application of moral and political laws. From the uniformity of the laws of nature follows the equality of all before the law. From the emphasis on the particular instance follows the recognition of the dignity of the individual human being.

If we try to analyse the underlying ideas of democracy, the first principle which attracts our attention is its emphasis on the unity of law. There can be no democracy unless the same law applies to all. Its relation to the unity of Godhead in religious thought is obvious. Ages passed before humanity attained to the conception of a unitary God. It also took ages before humanity achieved the conception of the unity of law. In fact, the conception of unitary law could not arise till the establishment of the unity of the universe. If there were different gods who held sway in different regions of the world, it was obvious that the same law could not apply to all men.

Unquestioning belief in the plurality of gods explains the paradox that even systems which at first sight appear democratic show on closer inspection an utter indifference to the concept of the unity of law. Often described as democratic, Greek polity fails in the test as it recognized different laws for different classes of citizens. The distinction of slave and freeman was a denial of the universal applicability of law. Roman law was based on a gradation of rights and obligations dependent upon the differing status of the different members of the state. The Roman citizen had rights to which his less fortunate fellows could make no claim.

Democracy presupposes not only the unity of law, but also equality of all before the law. This is in fact a corollary from the first principle. It, however, leads to the repudiation of birth and caste and is thus the first breach in the citadel of status. Primitive society is ruled by custom. Custom grows through the repetition of similar situations, and presupposes the sanctity of status. Because the emphasis is on repetition, custom tends to become a

rule of thumb which ignores the *rationale* of the rule. Different rules are, therefore, framed without seeking to discover the principle underlying the rules. Custom is, therefore, always diverse and leads to the creation of a diversity of rules for different people on different occasions.

So long as custom is the governing principle, society must perforce be divided into strata with divergent rights and privileges. Unification of society can commence only with the growing application of the laws of reason to the affairs of man. The theory of Divine Right of Kings was a direct contradiction of all claims to equality before the law. Yet Europe finally repudiated it only as late as the seventeenth century. The principle that the same law applies to all and applies in the same way, therefore, constitutes a revolution in human outlook. It is a substitution of persuasion for authority, of reason for revelation.

This mental revolution brought with it a recognition of the dignity of the individual. We have already drawn attention to the insistence on the importance of the particular in scientific thought. The growing importance of the individual in political theory and practice is its immediate corollary. So long as thought is deductive and the intellect delights in the abstract and the universal, the individual hardly exists for it. The capacity to submerge the particular in the general brings with it a toleration of inequality and even social inequity. Science rebels against such deductive thought and restores the status of the individual by its constant appeal to verification. Verification, as we have already seen, is an assertion of the particular against the claims of general law. There can be no democracy, where the particular is only a function of the universal.

One seeming paradox of democracy requires to be explained. One of the basic concepts of democracy is the assertion of the dignity of the individual. Another equally basic concept is, however, the triumph of the will of the majority over the will of the individual. The contradiction is, however, only apparent. The second concept is a logical development of the first. If all individuals are equal before the law and enjoy equal dignity, it is obvious

that no single will can as such prevail over any other will. In case of difference between different wills, the claim of any individual will to qualitative superiority is ruled out. The only possible alternative is to decide action in terms of quantity, i.e. in accordance with the dictates of the majority of individual wills.

This assertion of the individual first expressed itself in the formulation of political rights. The ancient Hindu concept of society emphasized community even at the cost of the individual. Islam tried to give greater liberty to the individual without, however, relaxing the demands of the community. The Chinese conception aimed at achieving a balance, while in early Christianity, the emphasis upon the individual at times went to anarchic lengths. Generally speaking, however, the individual was subordinated to society till the beginnings of the seventeenth century. It was seventeenth-century Europe that, for the first time, posed the individual against the community.

The influence of the Reformation and early capitalism encouraged the emphasis upon individual liberty and initiative. Pre-Reformation Christian thought demanded the submission of the individual intellect to the commands of the Church. Feudal society compelled the obedience of the individual to obligations imposed on him by the accident of birth. In a revolt against such restrictive influences, liberty came to be identified with the absence of restraint. It would, however, be a mistake to regard the conception as merely negative. The positive content of the concept lies in the exercise of initiative and enterprise. The emphasis on the community in the earlier concepts has, however, persisted and in fact reached its culmination in the modern conception of totalitarian states.

There is one other way in which the advent of Science leads directly to the growth of democracy. In the past, two different conceptions of human rights could and sometimes did exist side by side. Because of lack of communication, they could even be unaware of one another. There were also different systems of rights for different people within the same country. As each system of civilization was more or less a self-contained universe,

the dispossessed classes within it were unaware of even the existence of a different system and reconciled themselves to their fate. The progress of Science has made the continuation of such a state of affairs unimaginable. Whatever happens in one corner of the globe has an almost immediate repercussion on every other part. A comparison of conditions in different areas compels a movement towards uniformity not only between countries but also within each country itself. Divergent conceptions of human rights have no place in the world of modern Science.

Society is based on the individual's need for security. Liberty is an essentially social concept and as such has no significance outside society. In moments of crisis, the demands of security take precedence over the demands of liberty. Once, however, the minimum requirements of security are satisfied, the individual attaches greater importance to the claims of liberty. From this is derived the decisive importance of political democracy. The community as a whole must decide both what constitutes the minimum human requirements and what degree of control and authority may vest in the State to secure them. It is true that political democracy loses much of its significance without economic and social freedom. A residue of liberty even then exists, and there are hopes for its future expansion. Without political democracy the very possibility of social and economic democracy is destroyed. Political democracy is, therefore, the basis of all claims of the individual.

The constant appeal to verification in Science is an appeal to the individual or the particular instance. It is an assertion of the status of the particular against the claim of the general law. In democracy the claim of the individual to liberty is equally an assertion of his importance against the dictates of the community. The homogeneity in the nature of the universe demands that there can be no preferential treatment for any group or individual. Applied to the realm of human conduct, this gives us democracy in which all men are equal in the eyes of the law. What appeared as scientific temper in the sphere of thought, appeared as the democratic spirit in the world of politics.

III

The greatest triumphs of Science and democracy have been achieved since the seventeenth century. Anticipations of these triumphs are, however, perceptible from the beginnings of the present millennium. What is more significant is that progress is almost continuous and uninterrupted during this period. One of the essential characteristics of scientific progress is its continuity. Every succeeding generation inherits the achievements of its predecessors and adds something new to them. Any sudden breach of continuity in scientific progress would, therefore, tend to suggest an absence of 'scientific climate,' though even in such conditions a genius might achieve magnificent results. The fact that progress is continuous for the last thousand years or so suggests the emergence of some new factor or force which changed the attitude of men towards nature and its problems.

We have indicated above the dominant principles that govern the growth of both Science and democracy. Analysis of the basic concepts of Islam shows a remarkable similarity to these principles. This affinity combined with the fact that the triumphant progress of Science follows soon after the emergence of Islam lends strong force to the suggestion of a causal connection between them. What lends plausibility to this hypothesis is not so much the number of individual Arab scientists who flourished, as the unbroken continuity in the development of Science since the advent of Islam.

The first presupposition of both Science and democracy is the existence of a unitary world. Islam emphasized unity of the God-head in a manner which has rarely been equalled by any other religion. 'There is no God but God,' proclaims Islam. It has carried this urge for the unity of God so far as to deny that there is any religion but one. Each country and each age had its own prophet. Each prophet preached to his own people in his own language. The language, the people and the period may be different, but the religion was the same in every case. Islam has, therefore, repudiated the idea that an individual is the founder of any

religious faith. It has categorically stated that Muhammad is only one among the many servants of God. When on the analogy of Christianity, European writers describe Islam as Muhammadanism or the Religion of Muhammad, Muslims repudiate the description and insist that it is equally the religion of Abraham and Moses and Jesus and a hundred other named and unnamed prophets.

Islam's claim to universality follows from this emphasis on the unity of God. It holds that, as a religion valid for all times, it must reveal the eternal nature of truth. Truth cannot be changed though the processes of time may overlay it with accretions that hide or distort its real nature. Such accretions must be removed in order to discover its pristine glory. This in the opinion of Islam is the main function of the prophets.

Basically, therefore, all religions are the same. The reason why they appear as different is that in the course of time they have been distorted in different ways in different countries. No one can deny that ideas do change in course of time. The whole effort of philosophy to fix thought in stable forms is doomed to failure from the very nature of the case. Concepts change in the very process of articulation. Communication introduces a further element of uncertainty in the nature of our ideas. Islam's contention that the nature of religion has changed again and again in the course of time is, therefore, not surprising. What is surprising is the claim often put forward on its behalf that it is the final form and hence there will be no need for any more prophets to rediscover the nature of eternal truth. But of this more hereafter.

Emphasis on the unity of God and, therefore, of nature broke down the distinction between the natural and the supernatural. We have seen the influence of this idea on the progress of Science and democracy. In the field of religious experience, it led to the breakdown of the distinction between the secular and the religious. Islam is noted for its emphasis on the unity of all aspects of life. It recognizes no distinction between politics and religion, between economics and worship. In the words of the Qur'an: 'The whole of the universe is a place of worship.'

The conception of a common law for the whole of the universe left no room for miracles. Nor did it leave any room for the conception of the prophet as a superman. The Qur'an asserted again and again that Muhammad was a man amongst men and was subject to all the laws that govern ordinary human beings. When an eclipse coincided with the death of his only son, the unbelieving Quraish held it as a portent and wanted to accept Islam through superstitious fear. Muhammad's reply was characteristic of the new rationalism. He said that the sun and the moon obey the laws of God and pay no heed to the sorrows and joys of either a prophet or a common man.

One of the greatest Arab philosophers, Ibn-Rushd, commonly known as Averroes, distinguished himself by his insistence on the uniformity of nature. He did for Islam what Spinoza tried to do for Hebraism. His *Faslat Maqal* shows in some respects a remarkable anticipation of Spinoza's conception of the laws of nature. What is common to both is the insistence on an unfailing uniformity. Spinoza wrote his *Ethics* in the form of geometric propositions to show the uniformity of all thought. Ibn-Rushd was also a philosopher distinguished for the mathematical bias of his thought. This similarity is not perhaps accidental, as one of the most important disciples of Ibn-Rushd was Musa-bin-Maimun. Musa wrote in Hebrew and his work, known throughout Spain and thus accessible to European scholars of the day, may well have influenced Spinoza.

The unity of God and the denial of the distinction between the natural and the supernatural emphasize the universality of reason. Since God is one and reason seeks to express His nature, the laws of reason cannot but be the same for all. We have already seen that this cannot by itself guarantee the progress of Science without the recognition of the particular instance. We find evidence of this reverence for the particular in Islam's attitude towards the phenomenal. By denying the distinction between the phenomenal and the transcendent, Muslim religious thought values Nature not as a symbol of some hidden truth but for its own sake. When the reality of the empirical is recognized, the particular

comes to its own, for the empirical is always revealed in particular facts. The highest development of the particular is the human personality. Its ultimate truth is recognized by the Qurân when it says: 'Man is a trustee of the free personality which he accepts at his peril.'

The over-riding unity of God thus seems to be challenged by the uniqueness of the individual. Arab thought faced this difficulty in its own way. The *Wajudi* philosophers tried to continue the Platonic tradition and gave a pantheistic picture of the universe. This was, however, against the prevailing spirit of Islam. According to its teaching the individual cannot be regarded as a mere element in a universal system, but has an independent status of his own. The *Shahudi* philosophers held that the individual is real and maintains his identity even when confronted with the Absolute. They seek to illustrate this truth by a beautiful analogy. Stars may be shut out of our view by the sunlight, but the existence of the sun cannot cancel the existence of the stars.

This emphasis on the reality of the individual is, in fact, one of the features that distinguishes Islamic philosophy from earlier schools of thought. Islamic thought was greatly influenced by the Greeks, particularly by Aristotle. With all their reverence for his Logic, the Muslim philosophers could not, however, accept his emphasis on mere deductive reasoning. Ibni-Taimiya tried to refute Aristotelian Logic on the ground that it does not recognize the contribution of experience to knowledge. Ibni-Taimiya pointed out that empirical knowledge is invariably direct and immediate. It is not through an inference that we recognize the particular, but, on the contrary, it is the knowledge of the particular which makes an inference possible. He, therefore, rejected Aristotle's schema of major and minor premises and insisted that they are superfluous to the processes of our reasoning.

There is thus no room for doubt regarding the affinity between the basic concepts of Islam and the principles which govern Science. This helps to explain why the progress of Science has been almost continuous since the advent of Islam. That the relation between them has not always been seen is due to the incursion

of extraneous elements in Muslim religious thought. We have already referred to the fact that in spite of its recognition of the change and mutation to which all human thought is subject, Islam sought to make an exception in its own favour.

Muslim rationalists have sought to find an explanation for this seeming inconsistency. They have argued that Islam changed the basis of religion from faith to reason. So long as religion was based on unquestioning faith, it was subject to variations following from differences in individual character and temperament. Changing times made changes in them inevitable. When, however, religious faith was based on reason, the scope of variation was ruled out. Reason from its very nature is universal, and therefore, what is once accepted by reason as true must always be true. With the shift of emphasis to reason, Islam had, therefore, done away with the need of repeated rediscovery of Truth by a succession of prophets.

The line of defence is attractive and even plausible. One may concede that in theory, a truth of reason is always true. This, however, overlooks the distinction between thought and articulation. However perfect the articulation, it is never fully transparent. On the one hand, the articulation may carry with it suggestions and associations that are not intrinsic to the thought. On the other, some element of thought always eludes all our attempt to articulate it. The difficulty is further enhanced by the distinction between expression and communication. However fully we may express ourselves, can we ever communicate all that we intend? Perfect communication would mean absence of all distinction between the communicator and the communicant. Absence of distinction would mean identity, which rules out the need or even the possibility of communication. Hence even the truest concept of reason must suffer a double distortion, once in the very act of articulation and again in the process of communicating it to other minds.

Islam's appeal to reason cannot, therefore, justify the rejection of the need for continual restatements of the eternal truth. By the very logic which demanded repeated enunciation of the Truth

before the advent of the prophet of Islam, new formulations will be necessary even after his time. His shift of the emphasis from faith to reason has, however, effected one profound change. Prophets of the past depended upon appeal to supernatural manifestations of power and based their authority on revelation which was beyond the reach of our reason. The prophet of Islam laid down that religion must be based on reason, not authority. The assertion that he would be followed by reformers but not prophets can thus be explained as a recognition of this new achievement of the human mind. The age of miracles of faith was over. The age of the triumph of Science had begun.

IV

Islam's emphasis on the unity of God was the basis of its scientific outlook. It was equally the foundation of its democratic temper. The universality of reason demands from all rational beings the same behaviour in the same circumstances. So far as men are rational, they are equal in the sight of God. There is no distinction between man and man on the plane of humanity. That this equality and brotherhood was extended to all Muslims and not to all mankind is only due to the fact that the implications of universality were not fully worked out.

Islam, however, realized the concept of equality both in theory and practice so far as Muslims are concerned. This in itself is a remarkable achievement in advance of the practice of most other religions. In theory, every religion recognizes the principle of fatherhood of God and brotherhood of man. In practice, however, the fatherhood of God has remained an article of faith hardly ever applied to the daily transactions of life. Clash of colour and inequalities of birth, station and wealth have attenuated the ideal of brotherhood almost beyond recognition.

Even its worst enemies have, however, been forced to admit that Islam broke down the barriers of colour and birth among Muslims. Not only in the formal act of worship but also in daily social intercourse, the darkest Nubian from the heart of Africa

enjoys equality with the haughtiest of the Quraish or the most race-conscious of the blue-eyed and fair Aryan. Bernard Shaw has paradoxically but truly said that the real test of democracy is inter-marriageability. In formal worship, one can adopt an attitude of equality as one puts on ceremonial robes on formal occasions. The semblance of equality in political and economic life can also be deceptive. Even inter-dining may be a mere outward show reserved for special occasions. Inter-marriageability is, however, a test which permits no subterfuge.

Reverence for the empirical fact is another reason for Islam's insistence on the equality of man in the eyes of God and society. With the vista of life hereafter stretching to infinity, the indignities of the present life can be tolerated or ignored. If life here and now is of supreme importance, it is necessary that the individual must realise his dignity here and now. This also explains the absence of any priestly class in Islam.

In most ancient religious and social systems, priests acted as intermediaries between man and God. Like intermediaries in the secular world, they acquired power out of all proportion to the services they rendered. They were repositories of knowledge and alone knew the mystic rites by which the unseen powers that govern our destinies can be propitiated. Priests enjoyed power without responsibility. If power corrupts, power without responsibility corrupts even more. A hierarchy of priestly classes invariably degenerates into an oligarchy of conservatism and tyranny. By doing away with the priestly class, Islam raised the dignity and status of the individual and freed him from one of the most pernicious forms of mental slavery.

This urge for democracy found institutional expression in several innovations introduced by Islam. The first and foremost of these was the recognition of women as legal entities capable of holding property in their own right. Pre-Muslim religious and social systems have given a high moral or spiritual position to women. Economic independence is, however, at the basis of all social status and this the pre-Islamic woman did not enjoy. Her incapacity to hold property, therefore, made her a nonentity in

civil law. It is true that the rights given to Muslim women were not in all respects identical with those of men, but nevertheless, the first breach had been made in the citadel of privilege. The recognition of her independent economic status marks a new triumph of democracy over the difference of sex.

Islam recognized that nothing is so dangerous to social solidarity as persistent economic inequality. Maldistribution of wealth is in any case a cause of discontent and unrest. Its continued existence divides society into classes which, unless counteracted in time, develop into a division of caste. There are two possible methods for preventing such development. One is by abolition of all private property and expropriation of wealth now in private hands. This is the method which communism upholds in theory and practice. An alternative method is to create checks on the accumulation of property and ensure that wealth does not rest in private hands but circulates in society continually. It is the latter method that Islam chose.

The Muslim law of inheritance has often been criticized by jurists as tending to too much division of property and constant changes in social stratification. There is an Arab proverb that when a Moslem dies, even his cat inherits a portion. This tendency to continual division of wealth and consequent impoverishment of the idle rich is, however, the result of deliberate policy. The aim of that policy is to prevent the continuation of property in the hands of single families. The Muslim law of inheritance acts as an infallible check upon the growth of unearned income. It is thus an instrument for preserving the fluidity of the social system through the continuous disposal of family riches.

The second instrument for circulation of communal wealth was the institution of *Zakat* or compulsory payment to the communal fund. The idea that the wealthy must contribute for purposes of social welfare is ancient. What is novel in the *Zakat* is the element of compulsion applied to such payment. Equally significant is the idea of relating it to the actual wealth of the donor. Two and a half per cent of one's income may seem to be a very moderate proportion to the tax-payer in 1948, but we have

to remember that this ratio was fixed over thirteen centuries ago. Observed in the spirit and not merely in the letter, this institution in combination with the law of inheritance, operates against the stagnation of wealth in family pools and frees property from the bonds of birth and vested interest.

We have referred to the freedom of marriage which Islam introduced among all its adherents. This, as we have already seen, is both a test and a guarantee of democracy. The Islamic conception of *Zakat* and inheritance also contributes towards the same end. Nor can we overlook the importance of the abolition of tribal and family names as an instrument for enforcing equality within the community. Inequality of wealth tends to ossify into classes and castes, but the tendency is minimized, if not altogether checked by the elimination of marks which perpetuate the distinction. Family name is a sure harbinger of family pride. It immediately places the individual and defines his status in society, not by his personal qualities, but by the position accorded to him in the social hierarchy by the accident of birth. Abolition of the tribal or the family name obliterates such marks and tends to concentrate attention on the individual himself.

The close analogy between the basic concepts of Science, democracy and Islam have been briefly indicated above. There are no doubt differences in their emphasis on different aspects of these concepts. Such variations, as well as the fact that the basic principles were not always worked to their logical conclusion, account for the time-lag between their manifestation. They must, however, be regarded as a common movement of human thought in which the impulse towards generalization and unity was matched by the increasing realization of the importance of the particular and the individual. The relation of the universal to the particular is one of the perennial problems of philosophy. Science, democracy and Islam mark three distinct but closely related attempts to solve that problem.

THE CONCEPT OF DEMOCRACY

AMBIGUITY AND MISUSE

THERE can be no question that the term democracy has been used to mean different things in different ages. To the Greeks it meant the rule of demos or the rabble and was opposed to aristocracy or the rule of the *élite*. It is a far cry from such a view of democracy to the modern attitude when the voice of the people is regarded as the voice of God. It is inevitable that a term which has differed so much in connotation in different ages should also bear different meanings in the same age. Those who are contemporaries in time are not necessarily contemporaries in thought. Some continue to cling to the beliefs of their predecessors: others anticipate the thoughts of their successors.

Variety and even contrariety in contemporary views of democracy are, therefore, easy to understand. This is mainly an historical heritage, but it would still be necessary to explain why the same term has been used to cover such diversity of attitudes. *Prima facie*, the use of the same term suggests that there must be a core of meaning which remains identical in spite of variations in the concomitant elements.

A recent Unesco questionnaire sought to tabulate the possible objections against such a view. The objection that the term democracy may be used 'without any definite meaning at all' is patently invalid. In the end, the objectors themselves admit that the term may be used as a slogan or catchword to elicit positive attitudes. This ignores the elementary truth that whatever has no meaning can evoke no attitude. Initially, we do not have *words* but only *sounds*. They have neither a connotation nor can they evoke an attitude. Through repetitive use, a sound becomes attached to a meaning and it is only when this happens that we have a word. Students of Logic know that even proper names which start as

mere pointer words soon acquire a significance. Whatever evokes an attitude can do so only on account of the connotation it acquires.

A slogan is effective because some connotation has become attached to it. This is not to say that the connotation is definite or fixed. In fact, no connotation, even of the most abstract terms, can ever be absolutely precise. Scientists and philosophers know that in spite of all their attempts at definition, different writers use philosophical or scientific terms with variations in meaning that give rise to ambiguity.

In a sense, such ambiguity is inevitable to any process of thought. The function of thought is to generalize experience. Since experience is always growing, the terms must fluctuate in their import. A concept, on the other hand, tries to serve as a fixed focus in the midst of such flux of experience. Not only so, but a concept is hardly ever, if at all, completely intellectual. Conception is linked to perception which carries with it a penumbra of affection or sentience. The conative element cannot also be altogether ruled out. Most concepts are, therefore, part concept, part feeling and part volition. In the case of scientific and philosophical terms, the elements of conation and sentience are at a minimum. In political concepts these elements are not negligible so that their content is a complex of feeling, thought and volition combined in different proportions. This helps to explain the ambiguity in a term like democracy. There are different historical associations present in the minds of different individuals. There is in addition room for difference due to the different emphasis on the intellectual, emotional or volitional content of the concept.

It is thus obvious that the term democracy is, and perhaps must be, used in divergent senses. We would not, therefore, be justified in characterizing any use of the term as illegitimate, unless it can be established that the additional content which differentiates such alleged illegitimate use does in fact destroy the core of meaning which has achieved general acceptance as the connotation of the term. New and divergent uses are permissible

only if the divergence does not go beyond a certain point. On similar grounds, the application of the term to a country can be regarded as improper only if the state of affairs there violates or denies some of the characteristics which constitute the essence of democracy as generally accepted in that age.

An analogy may help to clarify the point at issue. White and black may be regarded as opposites, but there is a gradation of colours from white to black through different degrees of grey-ness. If any one of the shades is taken by itself, we may have no hesitation in placing it in one group or the other, but when they are taken seriatim, there are many points at which classification becomes doubtful.

The confusion is increased by the fact that in a concept like democracy the actual and the normative cannot always be kept distinct. In addition to the inevitable fluidity of content in any concept, we have here an additional element of uncertainty in the natural human tendency to confuse ideals with actual conditions. The difficulty of teleological explanations is nowhere greater than in a political concept. This is without doubt a factor for increasing the violence of controversy. An ideal is a state of affairs which is not existent but which is desired and believed capable of achievement. Thus the ideal is a possibility but not an actuality. One consequence of this is that the greater the gulf between the ideal and the actuality, the more vehemently it is desired. This brings an explosive element in all matters concerning the ideal or the normative. The fact that a concept like democracy represents partly the actual and partly the ideal, therefore, increases its emotional charge. It is not surprising that discussion about its import often ceases to be intellectual appraisal and becomes violent support or vehement condemnation. Students of 'Psychological hedonism' will readily call to mind that even so acute a thinker as John Stuart Mill was misled by such verbal ambiguity.

There is also the difficulty inherent in the nature of language itself. We have already seen that words cannot be confined to a point of meaning but must inevitably cover a more or less wide

area of significance. Through definition, this area is narrowed down but there are limits to the process of definition. We choose a particular meaning out of a set of possible meanings by reference to the context. Outside of its context, an isolated term has a bewildering multiplicity of implications and associations. If, in addition, the context itself should be variable, the demand for identity of signification is bound to become a case of conflict. Where a term seeks to express a broad field of experience, it is inevitable that different users will have different aspects in mind. To insist on uniformity in such cases would be tantamount to denying all interpretations except one's own. Such narrowness of view is bound to provoke opposition. Such labelling, docketing instinct is due to a desire of economizing intellectual energy, but often proves a potent source of conflict.

The crux of the problem, however, is to find a common characteristic, if any, in virtue of which the term democracy may be used to describe a series of situations or attitudes diverging from one another in many particulars. To my mind, this point of identity is supplied by a correlation between duties and rights. The one thing which distinguishes all the different political systems and ideologies which we call democratic is the urge to establish an equivalence if not identity between the two.

Historically, this is comparatively a new development in human thought. It was not always accepted as a self-evident truth that rights must be coincident with duties. For long ages, a vast majority of the people had only duties, but few, if any, rights. There has been no stage in society when duties were not enforced, but there have been many periods in history where rights or, at any rate, the same rights were not guaranteed to all. We may, therefore, say that two essential characteristics are found in all concepts of democracy and differentiate it from any other type of social organization. They are (a) the attempt to establish the equality of rights and duties for all members of a community and (b) the attempt to make rights and duties coincident.

The attempt at equalization of rights and duties for all is absolutely basic to the concept of democracy. It is precisely the

absence of such equality which marks an undemocratic society. Where a group has larger rights or, for that matter, duties, than others, we miss the differentia of a democracy. We must, however, give a more precise meaning to the equality of rights. It involves equality of opportunity but does not necessarily involve equality of enjoyment. Individuals differ from one another in a thousand ways. They have their own likes and dislikes, their preferences and aversions. Equality of rights cannot obviously equalize tastes and distastes, but it can and must imply that each individual has equal opportunity of satisfying his or her legitimate claims.

Similarly, equality of duties does not mean identity of functions. Here again, individuals will differ according to their latent faculties and course of development. It would lead to obvious absurdities if the same services were required from individuals with different abilities. Nor is such a demand necessary. No society can survive without a multiplicity of functions and services requiring different types of aptitude and training. It is, however, necessary that they must all be performed in the manner best conducive to the maintenance and progress of social good. Equality of duties, therefore, would mean that whatever be the function of an individual in a society or state, his degree of obligation must be the same.

SOCIAL VERSUS POLITICAL DEMOCRACY

The analysis of democracy attempted above would help to resolve the seeming conflict between social versus political democracy. Lincoln's definition of democracy as government of the people, by the people, for the people is as explicit a statement as anyone could expect. Lincoln's definition, if broken into its component factors, takes cognizance of all the elements necessary for a democracy. There is a reference to the obedience of the people to the Government, to the active participation of the people in the framing of decisions and to the value of such decisions for the general welfare of the people. The element of equal obligation for all implies the equality of duty for all citizens. The opportunity

of shaping decisions and enjoying their fruits is a recognition of their equality of rights.

If we remember that the equivalence of duties and rights is the differentia of a democracy, Russell's attempt to differentiate between the Anglo-Saxon and the Russian concepts of democracy must break down. The distinction between the rule of the majority and the interests of the majority can never be absolute. Wherever the majority rules, it is certain that but for stupidity or ignorance, the interests of the majority will prevail. The minority may at times arrogate to it all the wisdom of the community. It may claim and even believe that it is acting in the interests of the community as a whole. This may also hold for a brief period, but there is no record that consistently or over a long period, the minority has ruled in the interests of the community. Its interpretation of the communal interests has often been a rationalization of its own purposes and used to defeat the interests of the majority. It may indeed be said that the precise *raison d'être* of majority rule is to guarantee majority interests. The whole course of historical experience shows that any class or group permanently dissociated from the exercise of power is also permanently in a position of social and political inferiority.

The definition attempted above looks at democracy as a broad movement in human history. Its essence lies in the tendency to broadening of rights and duties and their equalization for all. If this is accepted, it is obvious that democracy cannot be merely a political concept designating methods of decision-making. It is a socio-political concept designating conditions and methods as well as results of decision-making.

This is not a mere terminological problem but goes into the very essence of the concept of democracy. It is doubtful if a mere political democracy could ever exist. The attempt to give equality only in the political sphere would be defeated by the existence of inequalities in wealth, position, status and, most important of all, intelligence and education. The classical jibe at free competition between an unencumbered athlete and a cripple burdened with a

load applies even more to the concept of political democracy devoid of all other elements of human equality.

The reason why the futility of mere political democracy has escaped the notice of even political philosophers is that, in fact, methods of decision-making cannot but influence the content of the decisions. Wherever the control of policy lies in the hands of individuals or a clique it is inevitable that, however disinterested they may be, the decisions taken will directly or indirectly be to their benefit. If for no other reason, this will happen because of the limitation in the point of view or approach of the participants in such an authority. On the other hand, wherever the decision-making body is large and represents diverse interests, it is natural that consideration of various points of view will lead to some decision which will be, if not most acceptable to all, at least the least unacceptable to the majority.

This is also the reason why it can be plausibly argued that political democracy is the best method of achieving the goal of social democracy. The contrary would not, however, be necessarily true. Even in the improbable contingency of achieving social democracy without political democracy, it could not continue to exist for very long. Here again, history offers interesting evidence on the point. Anthropologists are generally agreed that there was a primitive communism where property was held in common by the community. Such a system may be regarded as a type of social democracy. It could not, however, continue. The absence of political democracy meant the concentration of power in the hands of a few individuals or groups with results disastrous to the existence of social democracy.

In the light of the above remarks, de Tocqueville's attempt to differentiate sharply between democracy and socialism cannot be accepted. Socialists, or even communists, are right in their insistence that democracy necessarily implies the extension of the equality of rights from the political to the social and economic fields, that is, the abolition of privileges, the reduction of class distinctions, and perhaps even the socialization of the means of production. The attempt to deny such an extension in the meaning

of democracy by insisting on terminological exactitude is like the attempt to hold the sea back with a broom-stick.

Like de Tocqueville, Lord Bryce also sought to restrict the meaning of democracy by identifying it with a form of government. Both attempted to differentiate the form of government from the purposes to which government may be turned. They, therefore, claimed that political equality could exist either with or apart from equality in property. We have already seen that the whole course of human experience denies the basis underlying such a contention. It may be true that absolute equality in wealth is not necessary for maintaining political equality. It is, however, equally true that political equality becomes a mockery if inequalities in property range from those who have more wealth than they know how to use to those who do not have even the barest means of subsistence.

Another distinction between democracy and socialism prone to be exaggerated is the role of individual enterprise. In de Tocqueville's words, 'Democracy extends the sphere of individual independence, socialism contracts it; democracy gives to every man his full value, socialism makes of every man an agent, an instrument, a cypher. . . . Democracy wants equality in freedom, socialism wants equality in constraint and enslavement.'

The distinction on which de Tocqueville builds his case is, however, more verbal than real. In a laissez-faire society, the individual is supposed to have independence. As has been pointed out more than once, this freedom is very often nothing more than a freedom to starve. Deprivation of the means of livelihood places very real limitations upon the supposed freedom of an individual in a free society.

We have to remember another fact. In no society, whether free or otherwise, can a human being be regarded on the analogy of an undifferentiated unit in a complex. Even supposing that an individual is initially free, he is tied down by his own act of choice. Assuming that a man freely chooses to become a labourer in a field or a research worker in Relativity Physics, he cannot, without effort and perhaps disruption of his personality, change

over from one vocation to the other. Again, the moment he has chosen a vocation, he performs certain social functions and will prosper only so far as he acts as an agent or instrument of social policy. An individual who is continually fighting against social trends or attempting to reverse decisions which he himself has taken, would be much more of a cypher than one who accepts social obligations and carries them out to the best of his ability.

From the opposite point of view, one could argue with equal validity that the scope of individual independence is not and cannot be ruled out even in a socialist state. In a socialist, no less than in a capitalist state, there must be planners, executives and executants. Someone must attempt to anticipate the future in the light of past experience. Someone must try to devise concrete measures to carry out policies in the light of such anticipations. Someone must be there to carry out the particular acts which follow from the adoption of the plan.

Again, when an individual accepts fully and freely any role assigned to him, he has no sense of constraint in carrying out the actions which follow from the adoption of that role. Nothing gives a greater sense of freedom and creative activity than acceptance of one's station and its duties. It is division of mind and uncertainty about one's objectives that cause hesitation and a sense of frustration. Where, therefore, the objectives of the socialist state are fully and freely accepted, socialism would act not as a factor of constraint but of liberation and release of energies.

What is interesting to note in this connection is that the protagonists of 'democracy' and 'socialism' are, in spite of their violent disagreement about the relative values of liberty and equality, at one in their dissociation of means from ends. The 'democrat' emphasizes liberty and insists that whatever be the result, the method of taking decisions is what matters. So long as the appearance of a free political decision is there, it is immaterial to him whether the consequences bring social justice or not. In other words, he is concerned only with the means and not with the end. Equally, the 'socialist' who insists that equality must be established in every sphere of life, whatever be the method

adopted for achieving it, is prepared to flaunt his adherence to the view that the end justifies the means. Thus the two agree in the divorce of means from ends even though to one it is the means that alone matters and to the other, the end.

Without entering into a metaphysical discussion on this point, it may, however, be stated that all such attempts at divorce of ends and means have resulted in contradictions. Ends and means together constitute a unit. Any attempt to judge one element independently of the other invariably leads to imperfect, if not false, conclusions. Such attempts at divorce between the two are based on the uncritical assumption that all relations are external and that elements remain unaltered whether within or outside a context. Even if this should ultimately be so, no one has a right to assume it without examination. Experience shows that elements are *in fact* determined—at least partially—by the context in which they occur. Hence, dissociation of means from ends or ends from means cannot but lead to erroneous conclusions. To sum up, even if ends are not means, means and ends are so related that each modifies the character of the other. The condemnation of an end must, therefore, necessarily lead to the condemnation of the means to it. Contrarily, if the means are indefensible, this would immediately rouse doubts about the justification of the end itself.

TOLERANCE AND TREASON

We may sum up the result of our discussion in the three following statements:—

- (i) Democracy means a continual attempt at equalization of rights and duties for all;
- (ii) It is a continual process and we cannot foresee its end in any conceivable future;
- (iii) Means and ends cannot be divorced from one another without violence to the meaning of each.

It would, therefore, follow that democracy must tolerate the existence of opinions divergent from or contrary to those which

are accepted by it. It must tolerate dissentient *opinion* even when it is hostile to democracy, provided that, like any other state, a democratic state also reserves the right of opposing or suppressing action hostile to its very existence.

The distinction between opinion and action may at times be difficult to draw. Nevertheless the distinction is real and cannot be denied. A person discussing a political concept with half a dozen friends is clearly operating in the realm of opinion. The same idea expressed before several hundred persons in a University Union is a border-line case, while expressed before an audience of ten or twenty thousand, the discussion or speech might itself become violent political action. A democracy must, however, take the risks attendant on the toleration of such expression and interfere only when the expression merges into action.

To deny the right of expression to opinion only on the ground that it is opposed to the prevailing temper of society is manifestly unjustified. To deny it even on the ground that it might lead to subversive activities would be to deny the nature of democracy. We have seen that the connotation of the term is not immutable or fixed. Its meaning has expanded within the period of recorded history and is still expanding. Nor is the process likely to be completed soon. The vitality in the concept of democracy demands that opinions making for change in the prevailing state of affairs must be tolerated. The democratic state would, therefore, be justified only in suppressing the adoption of undemocratic procedures for changing its decisions. So long as changes are brought about through persuasion and acceptance by the majority, a democracy cannot, without denying its nature, suppress propaganda opposed even to the values for which it stands.

To suggest that dissentient opinions should be allowed only among those who accept the fundamentals of democracy is to beg the question. There are phases of history when the fundamentals of democracy are themselves in dispute. The controversy as to whether equality of opportunity should be restricted only to

the political field or should also be extended to the social and economic spheres is only one instance of the fact. History shows that the connotation of the term 'democracy' has itself changed and there is no reason to suppose that there will not be further changes.

If the aim of democracy is the equalization of rights and duties, it would follow that a one-party system can hardly ever, if at all, reflect a democratic society. It could, only if both of the two following conditions were satisfied, viz. (1) the equalization of rights and duties has been achieved, and (2) the party in question reflects not only the will but also the interest of the whole community. In fact, however, neither of the conditions has ever been fulfilled. Equalization of rights and duties is still an ideal and must for ages to come remain so. Nor has any political party ever succeeded in reflecting the will and aspiration of an entire people. On a specific issue, it is perhaps possible to achieve unanimity regarding what is good or desirable for society at any stage. Should this happen, a particular party which stands for that programme may for the time being act in the name of the community. Even on specific issues, this is a theoretical possibility which is rarely realized in practice.

Unanimity, even if achieved, is precarious for specific issues. For broad concepts of social welfare it is perhaps impossible of achievement. The facts of difference in history, background, experience, and temperament are bound to influence different individuals in different ways. It is, therefore, inconceivable that there should be unanimity with regard to the general picture of social welfare among all members of a society. The absence of parties other than the party in power would immediately evoke the suspicion that differences of opinion have been directly or indirectly suppressed. Those who claim that scepticism is part of our faith are, therefore, right up to a point. The course of philosophical development proves that no opinion is infallible. No group can, therefore, have the self-evident right to claim universal allegiance to its political creed.

To admit the possibility of diversity in opinion and belief is not

a sign of lack of faith in democracy. On the contrary, it may well be evidence of firm conviction about the justice of the democratic principle. In behaviour, we find that men are most insistent when there is lack of certainty in their beliefs. Where they are absolutely sure of a position, they feel no need to stress its rightness. People react violently when attacked in their weak spots. Disputants lose their temper only when they are uncertain of their grounds. In logical analysis, 'must' has in it an inferential element which makes it weaker than a simple, categorical 'is.' 'It must be so' never has nor can have the same force as 'it is.'

British toleration of the widest and wildest diversity of opinion has often attracted notice. It has been attributed to proverbial British illogicality, sometimes to the equally proverbial British phlegm. The truth of the matter however is that the British tolerate such differences because they are so sure of their own beliefs. Convinced of the truth of their own faith, they look upon all variations as aberrations which provoke pity or amusement but do not deserve condemnation. The even course of their own development, where democracy has broadened from precedent to precedent, has also induced in them this complacent attitude, which at times is irritating to people with a different political background.

The conflict between advocates of social and political democracy is due primarily to the intolerance which tends to weaken, if not nullify, the concept of democracy itself. Protagonists of either school tend to identify democracy with their own concept. They not only reject all other interpretations but deny their very possibility. They also tend to deny the element of growth and development in the connotation of the term. Much of their difference is due to the historical conditioning of their thought, but even after all instrumental differences have been allowed for, one fundamental difference in valuation remains. This is the opposition between the demands of liberty and security.

We have seen that there can be no political liberty for the individual without a modicum of economic and social security. We have seen that security is equally dependent upon a minimum

of personal freedom and initiative. There is, therefore, a broad field where the two concepts converge and the whole attempt of modern man is to extend the area of this convergence. From the nature of the case, there must, however, remain a borderland where the one operates to the exclusion of the other. Perhaps we should not say exclusion, for what happens is that the one principle is more dominant than the other in a particular field or phase of experience.

We may even agree in principle to the fields where the one or the other should predominate. In practice, however, such agreement will never be achieved. Thus we may say that in the field of thought there should be no limitation to liberty, while in the field of behaviour the need of security should govern our action. No two men would, however, agree as to where to draw the line between thought and action. In fact, such demarcation depends as often on feeling and temperament as on thought or belief. Some individuals are prepared to risk the present for the future. Liberty will have to them a stronger appeal than security. Others would like to assure the present and let the future wait upon its promise. Such men will respond more readily to the appeal of security.

Liberty and security may, therefore, be regarded as the *systole* and *diastole* of the human mind. But there will be certain minds to which one will have a greater appeal than the other. Lesser appeal does not, however, mean absence of appeal, for the two values, though distinct, are inter-related. Each is complementary to the other and cannot exist in isolation. Recognition of this should also be the beginning of a toleration which, finding room for both within the concept of democracy, can make its principle a deciding factor in the resolution of human differences.

1949

THE RIGHTS OF MAN

THE first and most significant consideration in framing any charter of human rights today is that it must be on a global scale. In the past, there have been many civilizations but never one world civilization. Two different conceptions of human rights could and sometimes did subsist side by side and because of lack of communication, could even be unaware of one another. Today such a state of affairs is unimaginable. Whatever happens in one corner of the globe has an almost immediate repercussion on other parts. Days of closed systems of divergent civilizations and, therefore, of divergent conceptions of human rights are gone for good.

The second consideration is that not only must there be uniformity between countries but also uniformity within countries. In the past, civilization and culture were often the concern of a section or a class within the country. It was only these classes who had any rights. As the systems of civilization were more or less self-contained and closed, the dispossessed classes within the country reconciled themselves to their fate. In many cases they were unaware that any system other than that to which they had been born was at all possible. There were, no doubt, revolutionary changes in human affairs from time to time. More often than not, these changes occurred when two divergent cultures or world outlooks met. Today the situation is entirely different. The continuous condensation of space and time is bringing different regions of the world more and more into contact and compelling, through comparison of conditions in different areas, a movement towards uniformity within the country itself. A charter of human rights today must therefore be based on the recognition of the equal claims of all individuals within one common world.

It is necessary to emphasize this because of one fundamental

flaw in the western conception of human rights. Whatever be the theory, in practice they often applied only to Europeans and sometimes to only some among the Europeans. In fact, the western conception has to a large extent receded from the theory and practice of democracy set up by early Islam, which did succeed in overcoming the distinction of race and colour to an extent experienced neither before nor since. It is against the background of a compelling movement towards uniformity that we have to examine the different existing conceptions of human rights.

The problem of the twentieth century is to reconcile the conflicting claims of liberty and security. A new charter of human rights must secure to each individual, irrespective of race, creed, colour or sex, the minimum requirements for a bare human existence, viz.:

- (a) the food and clothing necessary for maintaining the individual in complete health and effectiveness;
- (b) the housing necessary not only from the point of view of protection against the weather but also from that of allowing him space for relaxation and enjoyment of leisure;
- (c) the education necessary for developing the latent faculties and enabling the individual to function as an effective member of society;
- (d) the medical and sanitary services necessary for checking and curing disease and for ensuring the health of the individual and the community.

These are the four basic rights on the enjoyment of which all other rights depend. It will be noticed that they appertain to the security rather than the liberty of the individual. This is only a recognition of the fact that liberty is essentially a social concept and has no significance outside society. On the other hand, society itself is based on the need for security and therefore the demands of security must take precedence over the demands of liberty in respect of the minimum human needs.

The totalitarian systems have enriched our conception of human rights to the extent that they have compelled recognition of this fact. Their error seems to be that they have drawn no limit to the *precedence of security over liberty for the individual*. Both theory and experience, however, indicate that, once the basic minimum of security is reached, human beings place greater value on the rights and claims associated with the concept of liberty. Freedom of conscience or worship may be meaningless for a person whose mental faculties are restricted to the existing superstitions of his environment, but the moment he has attained some intellectual consciousness, he attaches the greatest value to the right of freedom of thought. Similarly, once the basic requirements of food, clothing and housing have been met, the individual is willing to forgo the claims to their extension and even accept some diminution in them for the sake of rights like freedom of speech or assembly.

To sum up. The modern charter of human rights must secure to all individuals in all communities and countries a basic minimum of human requirements in respect of food, clothing, housing, education and sanitary services. Since this cannot be done without planning and control, the rights of the individual must be subordinated to the community to the extent required for securing these claims. Once, however, the basic minimum has been assured, the individual must be at liberty to press for other claims without check or interference from state or society.

The crux of the problem is, however, to determine (a) what constitutes the minimum and (b) the degree of control and interference by the State necessary to secure these basic standards. On both these points there is room for wide divergence of opinion, and any formulation of human rights would be wrecked unless the difference can be overcome or methods found to resolve them without conflict or violence. From this is derived the decisive importance of political democracy. The community as a whole must decide both what constitutes the minimum human requirements and what degree of control and authority may vest in the State to secure them. It is true that political democracy loses much

of its significance without economic and social freedom. A residue of liberty even then exists and there are hopes for its further expansion. Without political democracy the very possibility of social and economic democracy is destroyed. Political democracy is therefore the basis on which alone the structure of full human rights can be raised.

Similarly in the relation between the group and the world as a whole, it must be the world which determines both the content of the four fundamental requirements and the method necessary to secure them. In all other matters, and subject to the over-riding authority of the world as a unit to preserve the fundamental rights, each group or community should be free to pursue such policy as it may desire for realizing the values it considers highest.

The implication of this is the creation of a world authority—democratically based on the will of all groups and individuals of the world—to ensure the achievement of the fundamental human rights. The lessons of history also point the same way. As already stated, right is itself a social concept and requires the creation of some authority within whose orbit individuals may enjoy it. Science is making the world into one through constant improvements in methods of contact and communication. This is breaking down the barriers of separate authority and of separate systems of rights. The corollary to a world charter of human rights is therefore the creation of some world authority.

Unfortunately, there seems no immediate prospect for the setting up of such a world authority. The demand for uniformity of rights cannot however wait, for within the same system there is no room for different standards. What can be done is to define the minimum human requirements in respect of the four basic rights mentioned above and ask for an agreement of all States to accept and enforce them. There must also be a similar agreement as to the degree of interference with individual liberty permissible for the purpose of securing those ends. Thus, the right to food and clothing involves the obligation to work, but there must obviously be some limit to the hours of such work, or

to the class of persons called upon to perform such work. A world charter should therefore confine itself to the definition of the content of the four fundamental human rights and the degree of control and interference permitted to the State for securing them.

1947

THE WELFARE STATE

ONE of man's perennial quests is to try to understand the meaning of his life and the nature of the world he sees all around. Many of the secrets of the outer world have been revealed to him but the meaning of his own existence still eludes his grasp. What makes the task of unravelling the secrets of the self more baffling is that man is at the same time a denizen of two worlds. As one among the objects which crowd the universe, he is subject to the laws of nature which are abstract, general and immutable. As a centre of self-conscious experience, he is at the same time responsible for his actions in a way which has no parallel in the physical world.

This duality in man's nature is further complicated by the fact that he is simultaneously a unique individual and a member of society. Without social co-operation and membership of the community, he could not even survive. At the same time he is solitary in his inmost being. His most significant experiences are those which he cannot share with anybody else. Even the experiences he shares with others come to him with nuances of quality that are peculiarly his own. In the flights of his imagination, in his ethical endeavours and in his spiritual quests, he is and must remain alone.

Man's uniqueness is like the centre of a circle. The centre is a point which has position but no dimensions. Our intellect cannot therefore grasp the centre without reference to the circumference. Similarly, man's uniqueness can function only in a social milieu. His social relations serve to define his self even though they cannot constitute it. The study of his social relations is therefore necessary for fixing the frame of reference within which his selfhood may operate. That is why ethics and economics and politics—at first as hardly distinguished elements but gradually as separate and developed disciplines—have from the beginning

of metaphysical thought constituted essential ingredients in man's study of the nature of the self.

In politics, man has sought to understand the nature of his relations to his fellows mainly in terms of group activities. Economics also deals with group activities and is as such closely related to politics. Its main concern is, however, with the satisfaction or utility derived from the material resources from which man derives his sustenance. Its basic fact is the inadequacy of natural resources (including human energy) to the limitlessness of man's desires and wants. Politics takes cognizance of the material facts of existence and the disparity between man's wants and the means to satisfy them, but its main concern is with the relations among individuals and groups which develop as a result of such disparity. Both economics and politics may in the end be regarded as ethics applied to the problems of the group.

Politics has also sought to explain why the individual must subordinate his interest to that of the group. This is the central fact of political obligation. In an organized society, the individual submits to the limitations society imposes upon his satisfactions. One interpretation of this phenomenon is that it is the imposition of the strong on the weak. Facts of experience do not, however, support such an explanation. Another interpretation is that men have entered into a mutual contract to further their own interests. Even this explanation is not adequate, for it cannot explain the cases where the individual is required and agrees to sacrifice himself at the behest of society. All explanations of political obligation in terms of individual self-interest are bound to fail, for it is only in a social context that political actions have any significance.

The close relation of politics to economics is the basis of the Marxian interpretation according to which the political structure of society is only a reflex of its economic organization. Because resources are limited while wants have no limit, there is a continual struggle among members of society to secure possession of these means. In the course of this struggle certain individuals and groups—either through superior ability or through a fortuitous combination of circumstances—win a position of vantage. Henceforth,

their one aim is to maintain their superiority and one of the devices to secure this end is the organization of the State. The State is thus according to Marx an instrument of class exploitation. Class struggle is the essential fact of economic relations. The class which possesses the means of production is also the class which is politically dominant and uses the myths of art, religion and politics to maintain its supremacy. According to the Marxist, all States in history have been instruments of exploitation. This state of affairs can be changed only by destroying the class structure of society and developing a Welfare State in which all citizens will contribute according to their capacity and receive according to their needs.

II

The emergence of the concept of the Welfare State is one of the most striking developments in political thought in recent times. There is little doubt that the growth of democracy is largely responsible for this development. This is clearly seen in the movement of all free countries towards this new conception of the State. Other countries which have attained independence recently or are still struggling to achieve their freedom are equally attracted by its idea. In fact, the term Welfare State has become so common that it is sometimes used without realizing what exactly it means.

A contrast is sometimes drawn between the Welfare State and the Police State. It is said that before the modern age, the main function of the State was to maintain law and order. As such, it was often described as the Police State—a use of the term quite distinct from the modern practice of applying it to a totalitarian State. Even if the totalitarian implications of the term are left out—and this is what will be done in the present study—the Marxian characterization of the State as an instrument of exploitation deepens the derogatory sense in which the term is used. The stigma attached to the term is even stronger in the case of colonial and other unfree countries. But whether free or colonial,

the Police State in the sense indicated above is intended to mean a State which is concerned only with the maintenance of law and order without bothering about the other needs of its members.

It is evident that in a free country, even if it is not a democracy, there are areas of common interest between the ruling classes and their subjects. In a democracy, the area of common interests covers, or at least aims to cover, the entire field of political relations. In the case of countries under foreign domination, there is on the other hand a sharp cleavage between the interests of the ruler and the ruled. An unfree country is thus the nearest approximation to a Police State. In such States, welfare activities and services are usually at a minimum. The chief concern of the State is to maintain peace and stability to allow the exploitation of the country by its rulers. In discussing the concept of the State, it would, however, be proper to leave such countries out of the discussion. Only a free country can be a State, for a country which is not free is not a political entity but an appendage to some other State.

There can be no denying that law and order must be maintained if a State is to survive. What distinguishes a society from a conglomeration is the structure of relations which binds together the individuals into an organization. The State is the political expression of this structure and supplies the framework within which individuals can live and have their being. The value of law and order cannot, therefore, be denied. It is like the skeleton which supports the body and like the skeleton requires something more to make the social relations full and satisfying.

The condemnation of the Police State is therefore justified only where the State performs no functions other than the maintenance of law and order and hinders their performance by anybody else. In fact, however, most such States, once they have guaranteed the stability of society, regard the rest of social life as a matter of concern for the individual. The position is not always consciously formulated but the basic assumption is that the individual should be the agent for performing all functions except those relating to law and order. There is of course the risk that the individuals might not perform these functions at all or perform them in an

unsatisfactory manner. There is the further risk that out of the many needs for service, only those may be selected which serve the interests of a powerful group. These are, however, faults of omission rather than of commission. So understood, the Police State as it has functioned in the past cannot be condemned outright. It provided the framework of law and order and left the individual free to operate as he chose within these well-defined boundaries.

As against this earlier conception of a neutral State charged with only the maintenance of law and order, we have today the concept of a Welfare State which tends to behave like a benevolent patron interested in every aspect of individual and group life. The Welfare State seeks to provide under public auspices services which were in earlier times the concern of the individual. In doing so, it impinges upon every aspect of the individual's needs and at times even tries to determine how his life should be organized.

There are both historical and psychological reasons why this extension of the functions of the State has taken place. Historically, the growth of industries and urbanization has led to the weakening of social bonds. A rural agricultural community is small and compact. All its members know and feel responsible for one another. In such a community, neighbourliness is both a need and a reality. In the mammoth industrial cities of today, people living in neighbouring rooms remain strangers. Each is busy with his own affairs and has no time to attend to the other's needs. The underlying social co-operation is hidden by an intricate pattern of division of labour. Even the bonds of the family have become weaker. Services which were formerly its responsibility must now be provided by the State or be unavailable. To take an Indian example, the old institution of the joint family provided a rudimentary form of insurance against unemployment, sickness and old age. It also provided to the young a corporate life which trained them in habits of co-operation and community living. With the decay of the joint family, the State must provide the unemployed, the sick and the old with the means of survival. It must also organize services in the school to provide amenities

which formerly the home supplied, and train the younger generations for effective citizenship.

Along with this historical process, the growth of democracy has brought about imperceptibly but inexorably a change in the psychological attitude of man. Individualism is essentially a modern phenomenon, even though ancient Hindu society permitted an extreme individualism to those who renounced the world and became religious seekers. Such men were however exceptions and in any case they were outside the pale of society. The vast majority of men and women in these older societies took it for granted that if their inclinations and the dictates of society clashed, they had no option but to submit. There may have been cases where the individual revolted but they were rare and hardly ever received the approval of their fellows. Socrates may be regarded as a test case. Perhaps the first conscious individualist in history, he stood by his conception of the right but accepted without demur the punishment meted out to him for his non-conformity. Today each individual claims the right to judge for himself what is good for him. Claims of society and family are repudiated today far more frequently and with far less hesitation than ever in the past.

By a law of psychological compensation, this assertion of the individual is accompanied by the growing belief that wisdom lies in numbers. It is held that the decision of a group is likely to be superior to the decision of an individual, however wise. The individual shorn of the support he formerly derived from his family or society seeks to find it in the impersonal entity of the State. Things which affect the future of the community cannot therefore be left to the caprice of the individual or even the family. The State seeks to determine through its regulations what food the individuals may eat, what clothes they may wear and in what houses they shall live. It prescribes the rules of health and the modes of training of the future generations. In certain extreme cases, it tries to dictate to the individual the thoughts he shall think. Even personal relations like friendship, love or marriage must wait upon the sanction of the State.

Belief in the superior wisdom of the group symbolized by the State has been accompanied by an attitude where the individual wishes to be beholden to none except the State or society. This also is a corollary to the growth of individualism to which reference has already been made. An extreme form of this attitude is found in some Western countries where a son, when he has attained majority, thinks it a humiliation to be supported by the father. The father for his part regards it as a humiliation to be supported by his son. Dependence upon the family is replaced by dependence on the State. Where interdependence has become unacceptable as between parents and children, it is not surprising that the individual should refuse to accept guidance or assistance from any other member of the family. Support and guidance are, however, readily accepted from the State. This is partly because the State is impersonal and the symbol of the unity of the group, partly because the individual, to however infinitesimal an extent, has contributed to the character of its totality but mostly because the individual feels powerless before the might of the State.

The Welfare State is thus an organization of society in which an impersonal entity—the State—concentrates all social functions and services in one common agency. This tendency to centralization has till now been an invariable characteristic of all Welfare States. Nor is it difficult to understand why it should be so. If certain services and benefits are to be assured to all members of a group, two conditions must be fulfilled. In view of the limited resources available, these must be deployed in the best possible manner. This demands a selection among the various claims and can be effective only if there is a central agency to make the choice. A central agency is equally necessary to ensure that once the services and functions have been chosen, no group or region takes a disproportionate share. Planning and centralization have therefore been regarded as essential features of a Welfare State, and it has not escaped attention that it carries with it the risk of a totalitarian State.

The Welfare State seeks to provide services and perform functions which in earlier forms of society were distributed

among a number of agencies. The State seeks to replace the prophet and the priest, the law-giver and the jurist, the family and the community. It seeks to cater for every conceivable need of the individual. Since it can operate only on a mass scale, its services are generalized and follow patterns which it expects to apply in spite of the idiosyncracies of individual men and women. As a symbol of the unity of the community, it seeks to sum up in itself the aspirations as well as the achievements of all its members.

It must not, however, be forgotten that the State as such is an abstraction and operates only through a Government which consists of a small number of individuals. These individuals, however wise and well-intentioned, are nevertheless limited by their own individuality. The wrong identification of the State and the Government can cause difficulties in any form of society, but in a Welfare State the risk is much greater. In other forms of the State, many functions are left to the initiative of non-governmental agencies which may act as a corrective to the prejudices of the Government. In a Welfare State, these correctives either do not exist or are only partially effective. There is therefore always a risk that the Welfare State may identify the good of those who are in power with the good of the community. If it is wrong to regard the general good as the sum total of the good of all, it is still more wrong to regard the general good as the sum total of the good of a minority.

III

It may appear strange but is nevertheless true that in discussions of the Welfare State, the concept of welfare is often left unanalysed. It is assumed without question that the provision of certain amenities to the people will guarantee their welfare. In a sense this is not surprising. Amenities can be measured and their acceptance or otherwise judged from the way in which people react to them. The reaction expresses itself through behaviour and a State can from the nature of the case deal only with behaviour.

Not even the most powerful tyrant can be sure of his control over the thoughts of his subjects. Feelings also are notoriously impervious to regulation. Like other States, the Welfare State must also confine itself to the external manifestations of human behaviour.

The State has not always recognized this limitation on its power and functions. A State which concerns itself only with the maintenance of law and order—as the Police State of the past was supposed to do—has no need to concern itself with the other activities of citizens so long as law and order are not threatened. In fact, however, the State—whether Police States of the past or Welfare States of today—has always sought to influence the thoughts and attitudes of its subjects. Systems of education have been framed in accordance with the requirements of the State. In an aristocratic society, the members of the aristocracy were given special training to enable them to retain the leadership of the community. Every change in the social circumstances and ideals has led to a change in the educational pattern. We have also examples of not only reinterpretation but of reconstruction of history.

The reason why the State seeks to extend the field of its authority is not difficult to understand. Its concern is with behaviour, but behaviour is the outcome of thought, feeling and motive. It is difficult, if not impossible, to demarcate sharply between thought and action. In order to ensure uniformity of action, the State seeks to impose—generally without the prospect of complete success—uniformity of thought.

This encroachment of the State into domains outside the field of behaviour has become both more insistent and more dangerous in the modern world. It has become more insistent because the world has become more closely interlinked and each State is affected far more than formerly by what happens in other States. It has become more dangerous because the power of the State to influence the thought and feelings of the people has increased manifold. Propaganda has been raised to a fine art. Powerful media of mass communication like the radio, television, the

cinema and the newspaper today enable the State to whip up enthusiasm for almost any cause. One striking example of this was seen during the Berlin Olympics of 1936. Nazism had come to power in Germany largely because of its unequivocal condemnation of the Treaty of Versailles. Such condemnation had inevitably led to the growth of anti-French feelings among the people. During the Olympics, the State decided that it must make a special effort to promote goodwill with France. The machinery of propaganda was turned on full blast with the result that during the Olympics it was the French contingent which received the heartiest welcome from the populace. In totalitarian States, the art of turning on or turning off the propaganda has become an elaborate ritual.

There is, however, a curious inconsistency in the attitude of the Welfare State in this regard. While it attempts to influence not only the behaviour but the thought and feelings of the citizens, it does not raise the question as to the psychological constituents of well-being. The programmes of welfare are measured, as is perhaps inevitable, in merely material terms. Communications are improved. Better houses are built. Facilities for education are expanded, diseases eradicated, hunger and poverty reduced, if not eliminated. New amenities are continually placed at the disposal of the people and the standard of life goes up visibly. It is no exaggeration to say that the commonest citizen of a Welfare State in an advanced country enjoys today comforts and luxuries which were beyond the dream of the mightiest potentates of the past.

No questions are, however, raised as to whether this increase in material welfare brings with it a sense of satisfaction to the individual. The drudgery of household work has been eliminated for the housewife. Machines are continually being substituted for human labour for the performance of difficult, tedious or unpleasant tasks. There are social insurances and other measures to secure equality of rights between men and women. Can it however be categorically stated that all this improvement in physical and social amenities has led to an increase of happiness for the

individual? Has even the increasing stress on individualism been an unmixed good? The growing emphasis on personal rights and privileges has served to weaken the social bonds. Individuals who have fought to assert themselves have at times found that in doing so they have lost the sense of belonging and mutual dependence which are essential ingredients in human happiness. Increase in comfort and luxury has not necessarily meant an increase in peace and contentment.

It would not, however, be proper for the State to raise these questions. Its business is to provide the material conditions which make good life possible. Because they are material they must be external. Further the provision of the material factors is a necessary condition for inner satisfaction. There may be cases of rare individuals who may be happy even without adequate food, clothing and shelter. For the vast majority, the lack of these amenities would make any satisfaction impossible. Material conditions may not by themselves constitute or guarantee happiness, but can there be any doubt that without them happiness would remain fugitive and illusory? In fact, one may say that the chief justification of the Welfare State is that it has for the first time brought within the reach of all the minimum standards of food, clothing, housing, education and health that are essential for the physical, mental and spiritual well-being of man.

IV

It is sometimes held that only a utilitarian philosophy can justify a Welfare State. The Welfare State seeks to subordinate the interest of the individual to that of the group. This follows the utilitarian principle that the aim of the individual and the group should be to secure the greatest good of the greatest number. Equality in the eyes of the State would follow directly from this aim. The law of diminishing return operates not only in the case of material goods but also of psychological satisfactions. Equal distribution of goods and satisfactions among all members of the community would therefore give the highest total for any fixed

quantum. Denial of certain claims of an individual or group would thus be justified in the interest of society as a whole. A Welfare State—with its concern for all members of society—would thus be justified by the utilitarian on the ground that the welfare of the greatest number demands the sacrifice of the interests of a minority or an individual.

A test case against utilitarianism has been built up in considering its theory of punishment. It has been argued that if utilitarianism is pressed to its logical conclusion, the consequence of a sin or a crime may conceivably be reward. Utilitarianism implies either an instrumental or a reformatory theory of punishment. On either hypothesis, there may be cases where the end in view may be realized, not by inflicting what we normally regard as punishment, but by curative and other measures which provide special amenities to the offenders. While no one would object to this within certain limits, the principle may be carried to lengths which are not only paradoxical but against the dictates of the untutored conscience.

Critics of utilitarianism have at times gone to the other extreme and insisted that punishment must be for its own sake. A wrong is a deviation from the demand of the right. That deviation must be cancelled regardless of consequences. A criminal must be punished, not in order to warn others or to reform him, but because the wrong calls for the punishment. Once guilt is established, there is no room for pity or reformation. Retribution must be meted out because it is a necessary consequence of the sin or crime. If the utilitarian emphasis on the reformatory aspects of punishment is unacceptable to the moral sense, such insistence on punishment for its own sake is at least equally so.

The rejection of the utilitarian theory of punishment and rewards does not by itself lead to a rejection of the concept of the Welfare State. There are, however, other reasons why utilitarianism is not in favour today. Fallacies have been pointed out in its basic principle. Difficulties of identifying the good with pleasure are insurmountable. The attempt to discard pleasure and measure the good in terms of some other criterion has also failed.

In fact, the concept of quantity cannot be applied, except metaphorically, to quality. Qualities as such are unique and disparate and any attempt to place them on a common scale leads to absurdities. It has been conclusively established that no calculus of pleasure can be drawn up. Still less is it possible to draw up a calculus of welfare.

It is, however, a mistake to think that the Welfare State cannot be justified except on a utilitarian hypothesis. In fact, the concept of a Welfare State is in some respects a denial of one of the basic principles of utilitarianism. A Welfare State bases its policy on a selection of what it regards as conducive to the best interests of the community. It restricts the freedom of individuals and groups. In certain cases, it may subordinate the immediate claims of a majority for what it considers to be good for the community as a whole. Selection involves a principle based on quality and this cannot be the sum total of either happiness or welfare for reasons already explained.

The basis of the Welfare State is recognition of the dignity of the individual. It is because each individual is recognized as uniquely valuable that the State seeks to interfere with the normal functions of society to assure him certain inherent and inalienable rights. It is significant that the concept of the Welfare State emerged only as a further development of the concept of democracy. Democracy was at first only a political concept and sought to regard all individuals as equal in the eye of law. For purposes of political decisions, it laid down that each one must count as one and no one as more than one. It was however soon discovered that this equality would remain illusory unless backed by equality in other fields. This led, on the one hand, to restrictions on the individual's right to exploit others as seen in labour and social legislation. On the other, it made the State provide on an increasing scale the welfare services which equalize opportunity for all citizens.

The dependence of the concept of the Welfare State on democracy is obscured because of such State's emphasis on centralized planning. At first sight it may seem that planning is

incompatible with democracy. Democracy depends on individual freedom and initiative while planning must impose curbs on both. As already indicated, the opposition is not absolute. Democracy limits the individual's freedom in the interest of the freedom of others. A citizen has the right to act as he chooses so long as his activities do not infringe the liberty and welfare of others. Planning on the other hand need not necessarily be imposed arbitrarily from above. Just as the political decisions of a democracy are the result of the interplay of the inclinations, wills and decisions of a multiplicity of individuals, the planning of the Welfare State can be the result of the interplay of the wishes, desires and hopes of all its citizens. The fact that society and the State are organisms in which the individual members act and react on one another and determine the nature and direction of their development makes such democratic planning not only possible but the only form of planning that can serve the real interests of the individual and the community.

Democracy owes its rise to various factors of which the religious element of the value of the soul is one of the most important. Unless each human being is regarded as unique and invaluable, there is no reason to insist that they must all be regarded as equal. The demand that each individual must count as one and nobody as more than one is a direct consequence of the recognition that all men are the children of God and in His eyes equal. It is this belief in the fundamental equality of man which makes a democracy disregard all differences due to position, influence or special gifts.

V

Belief in the dignity of man is thus the philosophical basis of the Welfare State. The Welfare State shares with utilitarianism the aim of achieving the greatest happiness of the greatest number but repudiates that element in utilitarianism which regards the individual as a means to the achievement of the satisfaction of the many. In its emphasis on man as an end in himself, the Welfare State reminds one of Kant's formulation of the moral law.

In his conception of the Categorical Imperative, Kant has distinguished three moments which may together offer a philosophical justification of the Welfare State. When Kant insists that every man should so act that the principle of his action may become a universal law, he is pointing out that the individual must make no special claims for himself. There is an inescapable human tendency to make an exception in one's own favour. In the world of morality—and this world can be realized only in a community of men—there is no room for such exception on any extraneous ground. This fits in with the aim of the Welfare State that opportunities and privileges must be equalized for all and there must be no special category of citizens enjoying rights greater than those available to all.

If Kant's first formulation emphasizes individual equality and the universality of law, his second formulation draws pointed attention to the dignity of the individual. No man—whatever be his position or performance—is to be treated as a mere means. Humanity in one's own person or in that of others is to be treated also as an end and never as only a means. By insisting that the individual is simultaneously means and ends, Kant also indicates a way of bridging the gap between the claims of society and the self. In the Welfare State, each individual must serve the needs of society and advance the interests of all, but this demand on his services is conditioned by the recognition that he is an end in himself and due regard must be paid to his personality.

The concept of the Welfare State is carried a stage further in Kant's third formulation where he declares that the individual must regard himself as a member of the kingdom of ends. If the first formulation defines the equality and the second the dignity of the individual, the third brings out clearly the element of social co-operation which is essential for the survival and welfare of both the individual and the community. Emphasis on co-operation helps not only to tone down the distinction between means and ends, but also to indicate that the good life is essentially a social concept. The individual is himself the product of various social forces and must in turn work to advance the interests of

society. The individual can find satisfaction and happiness only if he behaves as a member of a society in which each regards the good of each of his fellows as of equal value with his own. The individual is thus both means and ends and realizes his own good only in promoting that of others. The Welfare State therefore imposes limitations on the individual only in the interests of the community, and since the community is the totality of all the individuals, ultimately in his own interest.

A special interest attaches to the concept of the Welfare State as formulated by Mahatma Gandhi. What distinguishes his thought on the subject is not so much its content as the steps by which he was led to it. Almost all previous concepts of the Welfare State stressed the rights of the individual and were intended to safeguard his interests against the claims of society. The Mahatma arrived at the concept of the Welfare State from a consideration of the obligation of the individual. He was convinced that 'all rights to be deserved or preserved came from duty well done. Thus the very right to live accrues to us only when we do the duty of the citizenship of the world. Every other right can be shown to be a usurpation hardly worth fighting for.'

This emphasis on duty in the Gandhian conception of the Welfare State was a reaction against the unqualified assertion of the rights of the individual which has dominated political thought since the beginning of the Romantic movement in Europe. The assertion of the right of the individual was necessary at the stage when it was made. In course of time it had, however, been pressed to a point where it threatened the stability of society and hence in the ultimate analysis the welfare of the individual as well. Gandhi's reassertion of the importance of duty as a cementing bond of society was in fact a restatement in the modern world of its organic unity.

The modern world has also special reasons to guard against the risk of centralization that is inherent in a Welfare State. The enormous powers of mass propaganda seek to iron out individual differences and convert human beings into standardized units of society. The increasing mechanization of life tends to turn human

beings themselves into automatons. As specialization follows from the division of labour, this assimilation of men to the machine becomes even greater. All these factors which make for the loss of individuality are further reinforced by the enormous increase in the size and power of the State so that the individual feels more and more like a mere cog in a huge machine.

In his concept of the State, Gandhi sought to provide safeguards against these dangers. He wanted to limit the use of the machine in a way which would make it the slave and not the master of man. He was opposed to large-scale industrialization as he felt that it reduced the freedom of the individual and offended against his dignity. It was for the same reason that he disapproved of the enormous increase in the power and functions of the State. He pleaded for decentralization in industry and politics since it is only in small units that human relations can be retained and developed. Any organization which extends beyond an optimum size tends to become impersonal and almost inhuman.

Gandhi's concept of the Welfare State is therefore based on a deep and immediate perception of society as an organism. In such an organism, each member must act for and in the interest of others. The concern for the good of society is neither an imposition upon nor contrary to the interests of the individual. Because of mutual give and take, the ends are determined by consent and planning is the result of the co-operative effort of all. In his own words, 'Realization of Truth is impossible without a complete merging of oneself in, and identification with, this limitless ocean of life. Hence, for me, there is no escape from social service, there is no happiness on earth beyond or apart from it. Social Service must be taken to include every department of life. In this scheme there is nothing low, nothing high. For all is one, though we seem to be many.'

1954

Chapter Five

FREEDOM, AUTHORITY AND IMAGINATION

THE experience of two World Wars within the short interval of barely a quarter of a century is a warning which we can ignore only at our peril. No further evidence is necessary for the existence of the world crisis through which we are living. Achievements of the human spirit built up through centuries of devotion and endeavour are crashing all around us. The tragedy of this ruin and desolation is the greater because it is so deliberate and yet so futile. If an earthquake or flood had overwhelmed us, if volcanoes had poured their molten lava on the work of man, there would be even in our sorrow the consolation that the destruction was due to non-human agencies over which we have no control. The devastation which is taking place is, however, no visitation of nature, but an expression of the wild frenzy of men who are using all their energy and craft, all their endurance and courage, for a carnage of mutual destruction.

If we want to find a way out of this impasse and discover a mode of life which may save us from the repetition of such senseless massacre and destruction, it is necessary to understand the nature of the society in which such crises can arise. An understanding of the nature of society would at the same time imply an understanding of the nature of the individuals who constitute it. It cannot be stressed too strongly that society and individual are inseparable though distinct elements of one organic fact. For purposes of analysis we often treat such elements separately, but failure to recognize their indissolubility always leads to error and disaster. The tendency to isolate theory from practice supplies instances where such separation leads to distortion and danger. Reason and will must co-operate at every stage for the barest preservation of life. The will may not determine the truths of reason but it gives to reason its direction and urgency. Reason,

on its part, may not fully control the functioning of the will, but it supplies the content and prescribes the periphery within which the will is to operate. Reason without the will is impotent, but equally the will without reason is blind and empty.

The concept of society as an organism is, therefore, our basic fact. The analogy between social and physical organisms must not, however, be pressed too far. In the physical organism, the organism is the fact and its limbs are mere moments. The relation even in such cases can be regarded as one of interdependence, but there is no gainsaying the fact that the organism has a greater importance than the component units. The importance of the units is mainly, if not solely, functional, and these functions are determined by the purposes of the organism. Even where the organism and its units seem to have different functions, analysis will show that the contrariety is only apparent. It is, however, different with the social organism. Its units are centres of individuality and independence. They refuse to be regarded as mere components of the organism. Society no doubt claims the allegiance of its members, but the very fact that the claim has to be made and may in certain circumstances be refused, proves that the analogy of the relationship of the limbs to the physical organism cannot express the real relation of individuals to society.

A little reflection will show that the most noticeable characteristic of the crisis from which the world suffers today is a conflict within and between individuals and groups. Over-production and unsatisfied demand is only one symptom of this conflict. The individual desires blindly and secures chance satisfaction only because he is at war within himself. Society produces in abundance and remains unsatisfied only because elements within society neither feel nor think nor act in unison. The result is chaos and confusion in the individual, the national and the international spheres.

We can express this conflict most simply and yet perhaps most adequately by describing it as a failure to reconcile freedom and authority. Both freedom and authority are social concepts and must be so, for man is essentially a social being. This social

character is grounded in his nature itself. In spite of occasional aberrations, rationality is man's distinguishing feature, at once his crown and his cross. Rationality presupposes a transcendence of the individual point of view. A being, so far as it is rational, must, therefore, be social. We may arrive at the same finding in another way. Freedom and authority must be attended with self-consciousness, and self-consciousness without rationality is a contradiction in terms.

Since freedom and authority are both social concepts, and society is essentially organic, freedom and authority are distinct but not separate. Any attempt to regard one as primary is bound to lead to contradictions. Most of the problems concerning freedom and authority, and therefore conflicts and crises in human society, are due to loss of insight into this fundamental fact. The moment we try to isolate freedom from authority and base the one upon the other, we distort their true significance and misunderstand the nature of the social whole with consequences that are disastrous for society and individual alike.

The paradox may be stated as follows. Freedom and authority both represent normative claims and in purely natural happenings there is no question of either. An event either happens or does not, and there the matter ends. It is only metaphorically that the earth exercises compulsion on the falling apple. The activity and hence the freedom of the apple in such a situation are both purely metaphorical. The limbs of the human body have as little freedom as his body has authority. It is only in the realm of self-conscious and, therefore, unique individuals that the conflict between freedom and authority can arise.

Stated in this way, it becomes clear that purely economic or political explanations of the human crises are over-simplifications. Belief in purely economic action is even rarer today than that in the mere economic man. It is being more and more clearly realized that economics is not a true description of one particular kind of action but a description of all action from an abstract and arbitrary point of view. Economics abstracts from the specific characteristics of different kinds of action and concentrates on the aspect

which is common to all of them. There is only one such aspect and this derives from the fact that all action is purposive. The purposes may be different, but all actions share the common characteristic of having in view some end or other. This common aspect of actions is their suitability for their respective ends. This suitability defines their utility, and hence economics is the science of utility.

Utility and satisfaction are, however, as the analysis of psychological hedonism has shown time and again, mere abstractions. So far as economics deals with such abstractions, it shares in the fundamental abstractness of science. It is self-evident that satisfaction varies from individual to individual and from time to time with the same individual. What satisfies A, B abhors. Utilities which X seeks today, he repudiates tomorrow without the slightest hesitation. Conflicts within and between individuals and societies, therefore, arise not in the pursuit of abstract relational schema of *the economic*, but on account of goods which rightly or wrongly are believed to possess intrinsic or absolute value.

Political explanations of the human crises suffer from a similar defect. Man is not consistently a political animal. The world that is most important to him is the world he has built up round his own experiences. No two men are exactly alike. The innate uniqueness of individuality compels the ultimate separation of every man from his fellows. He may combine with others for economic or political purposes, but he cannot merge his being into that of his fellow men. There will always be the irrational side of his personality. The spiritual sphere of human life—interpreting the term to mean religion, philosophy and art—is the province where the unique quality of individuality finds full play. Men utter the same shibboleths and protest loyalty to the same ideals, but the white light of the abstract ideal comes to each man tinged with the colour of his own personality.

The state has in the past sought and seeks even today to dominate the private life of its members and determine the quality and texture of their experiences. It has sought and is seeking to dictate

what thoughts they shall think and what beliefs they shall believe, under the threat of repudiation or even persecution for non-conformity to its demands. Such dictation is, however, bound to fail. Man's thought is his own and not the most dictatorial of States can take it away from him. The State can control conduct or, more accurately, behaviour—the external and observable aspects of the action of the individual. To admit this is to recognize that like economics, politics is not a true description of one kind of action, but an abstract and arbitrary description of all action. Unless we remember that this is so, both economic and political analyses are bound to lead to error. The State can, through law, maintain only the universal external conditions of social order. This, like the utility of economics, is an abstraction for which no man will fight.

Political and economic explanations of the crises in civilization, therefore, fail. They depend upon a view of man that makes him appear more intellectual than he actually is. Man is neither wholly nor consistently economic or political in his motive or action. He cannot be summed up in any formula however elaborate. His action is not a mere example of some abstract law. The irrationality or illogicality of which the economist or the politician accuses him is only the emergence of some aspect or element in his nature which the economist or the politician ignored or overlooked.

The failure of economic or political explanation of human conduct has led some thinkers to deny altogether the efficacy of thought in the management of human affairs. Instinct, not reason, they say is the basis of society. They hold that just as there is a gregarious instinct which leads to the formation of society, there is a pugnacious instinct which leads men to fight one another. For them, the basis of society is instinctual and these conflicts are equally the result of instinct. So long as man is man, he will love and hate, make friends and fight. Advance of civilization can only extend the scope and scale of his operations but cannot change his innate character.

In place of the confident rationalism of the nineteenth century,

the modes of modern thought are curiously diffident about the powers of reason. The nineteenth century tended to identify reason with the discursive intellect. If the reaction had led to a wider conception of the scope and functions of reason, philosophy would have gained by it. Unfortunately, however, the tendency has been towards a growth of anti-rationalism. The multiplication of instincts to explain the multiplicity of human action is only one instance of it. Like the invocation of instinct, the exaltation of feeling and the enthronement of the unconscious are symptoms of the malady. The emergence of fatalism in several schools of dialectical materialism—perhaps the most characteristic mode of political thought of the present century—is a fresh and damaging proof of man's pragmatic distrust in the efficacy of reason for the purposes of practical life.

Instinctual explanation of human action is, however, a confession of failure in social analysis. It brings out an instinct to explain any action for which its pre-conceived theories fail to account. The result is a multiplication of instincts to which no limits can be drawn. Votaries of the theory agree neither about the number nor about the nature of such instincts. The experiments of the behaviourists have further discredited the instinctual theory of human activity. Even those who do not accept the fundamental standpoint of behaviourism must admit that its researchers have undermined the solid stability of the instincts. If reflexes can be conditioned and elaborate modes of behaviour built out of simple responses, there is in principle no limit to the possibilities of variation in human conduct. If we know neither the number nor the nature of the instincts and further admit that both are variable, there is hardly any point in explaining individual or social conflicts in terms of them.

The instinctual theory of human conduct is, therefore, untenable; neither is it necessary. The failure of economic and political explanations is due, as we have already seen, to over-intellectualization. They seek to apply to human conduct the methods of scientific analysis and fail because the abstract concept cannot express the individual in its infinite complexity and wealth of detail.

The rejection of abstract analysis does not, however, necessarily require the rejection of reason. That would follow only if it is held that abstract analysis is the only mode of thought. The presumption is derived from the fact that such analysis is the method of science, and science is rational. From the rationality of science it is then inferred that there can be no rationality outside the precincts of science. This may really be the case, but it is too big an assumption to make without proper examination and proof. However that may be, it is undeniable that neither intellectual nor instinctual interpretations can explain adequately the causes of social malaise. Both, however, indicate that the source of the malaise is to be found in the stubborn intransigence of the individual in society.

II

An analysis of society reveals to us that social phenomena are always in a state of unstable equilibrium. This instability is the result of the conflict between freedom and authority and is aggravated by the maladjustments between social order and social content. Social order may be defined as the pattern of relations that has grown through the interplay of the forces with which the different units in the social organism are charged. It rests on the distinction of the interests of the different social elements and constitutes an attempt to achieve a harmony among the conflicting interests. Social content may be defined as the sum total of the desires and anticipations, experiences and aspirations, interests and allegiances of the mass of individuals who constitute society. At its best, the order achieved by any society is a precarious harmony that the slightest redistribution of emphasis among the different interests might upset. At its worst, the order represents the tyranny of one predominant interest, secure only as long as it can keep in check the balance of growing forces arrayed against it.

The maladjustment between social order and social content is, in a sense, almost inevitable. The social order is a growth deter-

mined by the interplay of interests within a given framework. Such a growth requires time but there is no guarantee that the relations between the interests constituting society will remain stable and unchanged during the period of growth. The units of society have their own laws of change and these not only may but generally do differ from one another. By the time a social order is stabilized, it may have ceased to represent a true balance of forces between the different elements of the social content. If we take a cross-section of society at any point of time, the order revealed will be the reflection, not of the prevailing disposition of social interests, but that of the interests of the stage immediately antecedent to it. The social structure and the social content belong to different regions in the order of growth but they are juxtaposed into one another on the same temporal plane.

We have already pointed to the refusal of the individual to be submerged in social consciousness. Man is a social being, no doubt, but equally he is a solitary pilgrim of eternity. If he were wholly social, there would be no problem of the relation of authority and freedom. Authority, which is the dynamic expression of the prevailing social order, would be merely a function of the social content so defined. If, on the other hand, he were completely alone, the discord between authority and freedom would equally disappear. Freedom would, in that case, be merely a function of his solitariness. It is the stubborn intransigence of the individual in society that is at the root of our problem, but the inevitable time-lag between the social order and the social content further aggravates it.

This disharmony between social order and social content is the motive force behind all social change. Conflicts whether on the international or intra-national scale arise out of this disharmony. In the political field, it explains the discontent and unrest that seek to extend the system of rights till it is co-extensive with that of duties. In the field of morality and religion, it seeks to harmonize the conflict of interests within the individual till they coincide with the balance achieved by the social organism as a whole. In the sphere of social relations, it is responsible for the

continuous adjustments that are required for maintaining the dynamic equilibrium of society against the stresses which particular interests impose upon it.

Such a dynamic conception of society and its order is in all essentials true, but the process of growth and change is concealed by several factors inherent in the structure of society itself. A properly organized social order would immediately respond to the minutest variation in the distribution of emphasis among the several units. A change of development in the social content would in that case be accompanied or neutralized by a corresponding variation in the structure of the social order itself. In such a society, evolution would be the natural law of growth.

This, however, is only an ideal and serves only to prescribe the end towards which social activity ought to be directed. In actual life, societies represent an unstable equilibrium achieved by the interplay of interests at any particular point of time. This instability is based upon the imperfect organization of the forces which in their struggle and co-operation determine the structure of human society. The fusion of the conflicting interests is incomplete and varies from society to society. Where the fusion is complete, society responds easily and without conflict to the slightest change. The elasticity of the social order is thus measured by the degree of fusion. The power of adjustment and growth varies from society to society, but in no case is this power equivalent to the demands made by the incessant metabolism which characterizes all living societies.

A social form must, therefore, from its very nature, make for rigidity and permanence. Form is the universal imbedded in the nature of a particular. It is impervious to the alterations in its particularity so long as these alterations do not negate the universal imbedded in it. When such negation takes place, we are faced with a metamorphosis which seems abrupt and discontinuous. We call it a revolution, but it is a revolution to us only because we cannot translate into our conceptual patterns the continuity of alterations made possible by the contingency of the particular. This law of inertia of social forms is the first factor which con-

ceals and, what is worse, opposes the continual alterations going on within the social organism.

The second factor, though distinct from, is closely connected with the first. We have seen that all social forms exhibit an elasticity of variation that is less than unity. This relative inelasticity is due to an imperfect fusion of the different interests which together constitute the social group. The imperfect organization entails that some of the interests within society are weighted as against the others. The unequal weightage of some interests against the others secures to such elements of the social content a position of privilege. The consequence is that the preservation of a particular form of society, and hence a particular type of state-form, becomes identified with their group interest.

These two factors—the intrinsic inertia of all forms and the identification of the interests of society with those of a particular group within it—tend to increase the resistance of the social order to the pressure exerted upon it by alterations in the nature of the social content. Social content is and must from its nature be in a state of continual flux. The change takes place, not only through the process of time and the consequent accumulation of new experiences, but also through subtle alterations in the disposition and relation of the elements within a society. Like the slightest change of tone which yet makes all the difference in the atmosphere of a landscape, the slightest variation in the emphasis of the different elements transforms the social content almost beyond recognition.

The rigidity of form and the flux which characterizes its elements invariably tend to increase the maladjustment between social order and social content. There is danger of explosion whenever the form fails to adjust itself to the content in time. Factors which enhance the rigidity of form are to be regarded as reactionary precisely because they increase such risk. Where the social order is too rigid, it is no longer a dynamic equilibrium of conflicting forces, but a formula or pattern forcibly imposed on the multiform factors comprising society. The result is a growing tension between the rigid and static social form and the repressed

and submerged elements of the social content. There can be no relief unless the social order gains in elasticity, or in the alternative, the suppressed elements gather sufficient energy to compel a violent overthrow of the prevailing social order.

Overthrow of the social order might mean either internal or external conflict, but in either case there would be an explosive social revolution. Just as an earthquake relieves the growing stress between the different strata of the earth and establishes a new equilibrium, such revolutions would tend to establish a new balance between the diverse elements of the social content. In the process, it would generally destroy those aspects of the social order which make for rigidity and oppose timely adjustment to change. It may, however, in the general upheaval also destroy many of the acknowledged values in the structure of the superseded system.

The disadvantages of such violent revolution are three-fold. The concentrated energy of the repressed elements might, in certain conceivable circumstances, destroy not only the repressive elements of the social order, but in the revolt against particular dis-values, destroy the social order itself and along with it all the values which that society has painfully evolved. A revolution may destroy an equilibrium which is becoming oppressive and substitute in its place a new harmony at a higher level. There is, however, also the possibility that the disruptive forces which it unleashes may destroy all equilibrium and bring back a state of disorder that would be a falling-back even by the standards of the superseded society. This lapse towards a lower form of social order may well be described as a return to chaos, which would be the end, at least for the time being, of civilization and culture for that society.

Even if all values are not destroyed, there is no guarantee that the revolution must necessarily set up a system of values more comprehensive and satisfying than the one it supersedes. In most cases, this will no doubt be the tendency. The tension which provokes the outburst will not be released till some more satisfactory equilibrium is established among the conflicting

forces. We must, however, remember that the motive force of the revolution will be supplied by some interest or interests that have been suppressed in the past. In the natural course of events, these interests would seek for and perhaps secure compensation for the comparative neglect or repression from which they formerly suffered. There will thus be a very real danger that the new equilibrium will give undue weightage to the forces formerly repressed and repress those which had the freest play in the old regime. This would create, though inversely, the conditions which led to the last revolution. In other words, the harmony achieved will again be a one-sided and incomplete harmony, and hold within itself the certainty of fresh upheavals. Revolutions, almost without exception, breed new revolutions and those who take to the sword shall, through the logic of events, perish by the sword.

All this is on the assumption that the revolution will succeed, but from the very nature of the case there can be no guarantee of success. An unsuccessful revolution, instead of releasing the strain through a more satisfactory alignment of forces, is more likely to lead to acuter repression. This would drive underground the forces that seek free play and thus insure the occurrence of a further and perhaps more violent explosion.

Whether the revolution succeeds or not, it is bound to bring in its wake great human suffering and misery. This is an inevitable feature of any disruption of social harmony. Pain in itself is never good, even though it may at times have a cathartic value which compensates for its intrinsic evil. If an end is in itself supremely desirable, and if that end can be achieved only through the intermediation of pain, we may accept it as a necessary corollary to the attainment of that ideal. We must, however, be sure that there is no other way, and even then, it is something to be suffered only for the sake of the good to which it ultimately leads.

The aim of enlightened policy should, therefore, be the creation of conditions in which revolutionary changes may take place without the need of a violent disruption in the continuity of social life. The maladjustment between social form and social

content inherent in the nature of a developed and complex social organism makes rapid and far-reaching changes inevitable. Revolutions can, therefore, be avoided only if the elasticity of the social form can be heightened to such an extent that it responds to the changes in the social content with sufficient rapidity and sensitiveness to avert the necessity of an explosive outburst. This is perhaps what Whitehead had in mind when he spoke of the interplay of static vision and dynamic history in the production of a type of society in which satisfaction is mated with survival.

III

The intransigence of the individual is then at the back of all conflicts of human society. It is born out of an imperfect realization that good is either social or it is not good at all. Attempts were made to enhance this realization through education. The whole of the nineteenth century was, therefore, inspired by a faith in rationalism. The change of heart which it was hoped would result from the spread of education did not, however, take place. It was intellectually grasped that if man is to live in community with his fellows—and no alternative mode of life is possible for him—what he intends and achieves must, at least in the long run, bring benefit to others as well. Intellectual recognition was not, however, accompanied by a change in the modes of conduct, and men went on fighting one another in the name of the true, the beautiful and the good.

In a sense, the failure of nineteenth-century rationalism was inevitable. It sought to apply the methods of abstract analysis to problems of human personality without enquiring whether such methods are applicable there. Abstract analysis is par excellence the method of science. We need not stress here the fact that even science requires constant reference to a particular, though it is indifferent as to *which* particular it is. It is this indifference to particularity which makes science the most fruitful field of abstract analysis. The scientific concept thus treats all its instances as indistinguishable members of a class. The essence of personality,

however, is that each individual is a distinct centre of self-consciousness. Further, the concept is a function of unity used by the self-conscious subject for explaining the order and regularity of his multi-form experiences. It cannot, therefore, serve as a principle of explanation of the self. The recognition that the individual is indefinable marks a limit to the application of the scientific concept. It also demonstrates that the intellect is only an instrument of knowledge and cannot, therefore, be equated with the self which is the subject of knowledge.

We may here indicate one of the reasons why nineteenth-century rationalism, in spite of its fervour and optimism, failed. The importance of science has been constantly increasing since the days of the Renaissance. This has had its effect on our conceptions of society and the state. The various forms of the social contract theory mark the efforts of the human mind to account for society on the analogy of physical science. Individuals and their contractual relations were the counterparts in political theory of atoms and gravitational relations in Newtonian physics. In a word, categories of natural science were without examination or criticism sought to be applied to problems of human action.

There was a change in the method of science itself with the rise of biology during the nineteenth century. Along with this change in scientific method, the nature of political theory also changed. Theories of social contract were gradually replaced by the concept of society as an organism. Relations between the members of society were no longer regarded as mere generalizations of individual self-interest. Social phenomena demanded explanation on a basis of mutuality transcending the limits of mechanical interaction. As a consequence, it also began to be realized that instead of saying that man is rational we ought rather to say that man is becoming rational. This was no doubt a development in the right direction, but the fact remains that here again scientific categories were applied without criticism or question to social phenomena. The rationalism of the nineteenth century was, therefore, not so rational as it claimed to be.

The recognition of the organic character of the state and the

individual did not, moreover, have any perceptible influence upon the principles or methods of education. Education continued for long to be a discipline of the intellect alone. It is only in recent times that the emphasis is being shifted to the education of the instincts and the feelings. This failure of nineteenth-century rationalism to apply the results of its own findings to the solution of practical problems is not a matter of accident. It is another instance of the strain of anti-rationalism which Whitehead found to be characteristic of scientific thought. He has indicated one of its causes in science's distrust of the general law. Another cause is to be found in the divorce of theoretical reason from the practical will to whose disastrous consequences we have already referred.

Thought is by its nature general and seeks to introduce into the variety and flux of experience an element of order and stability. Education of the intellect, therefore, encourages uniformity in conduct, but unless the other elements in human nature—instincts, emotions and the will—are educated simultaneously, mere education of the intellect defeats its purpose. The reason for this is not far to seek. The intellect operates through concepts, for of all types of generalization, classification under a concept is simplest. Emphasis on the intellect tends to conceptualize all experience and generalize still further an aspect of our nature which is intrinsically general. This can only aggravate the distinction between thought and those other aspects of our nature which are essentially unique. The result is conflict within the individual of which social conflict is both an effect and magnified reflection.

The conflict can be resolved only by discovering some principle which can unify the general with the unique. If concepts were our only instrument for generalization of experience, it is evident that such harmony could not be achieved. Man would, in that case, be doomed to inner conflicts with their disastrous repercussions on external affairs. Fortunately for us, we have instances of other types of generality. The world of feeling is just as real as the world of reason, and has an immediacy which thought often lacks. Feelings are in their nature unique, and yet under certain

conditions achieve a universality which cannot be expressed in conceptual terms.

Another type of non-conceptual generality is to be found in the realm of the will. The will expresses itself in decisions each one of which is unique, and yet it is the same will which manifests itself in each one of them. It is obvious that we cannot explain the relation of the will to its decisions on the analogy of the relation of the universal to its particulars. The conceptual nexus is based on indifference to particularity. It is immaterial whether we refer to instance A or instance B. The volitional nexus presupposes the uniqueness of each instance. To suggest that one decision can be replaced by another would be to show a total misunderstanding of the nature of the will. These instances from the world of feeling and volition show that in addition to the world of concepts—where the particular is only an instance of the universal—there are other regions of experience where universality and uniqueness coalesce. In other words, in addition to the world of particulars, with which conceptual analysis deals, there is also a world of individuals whose nature cannot be revealed by abstract thought.

The considerations stated above confirm our earlier hypothesis that the problems of the modern world centre round the individual. All philosophers agree that the study of the individual is in a special sense the province of the imagination. Reason, we have seen, cannot express the nature of the individual, as the essence of rationality is universality and necessity expressing itself through concepts. The individual on the other hand is what it is, not on account of the features it shares with other individuals, but on account of those which are its unique possession. Whether it be the world of art in which feelings find unique embodiment or the field of morality in which the will expresses itself in unique decisions, we have here a range of experiences whose true appreciation depends on the significance of the individual. The individual can be most briefly described as the unique universal. Imagination penetrates into the uniqueness and achieves for it aesthetic or moral universality. A critique of imagination is thus essential for a proper understanding of the central problem of our age.

This, however, is not all. Art is not only an embodiment of the individual but also the expression of emotions and instincts. In fact, it is the only expression that mankind has till now achieved. An intellectual judgment expresses little of the excitement and energy with which our instincts are charged. What are left unexpressed in such judgment do not therefore cease to be. They recede from the foreground of consciousness and are submerged in what we often describe as the unconscious. They, however, influence our conduct more than we know or care to admit from behind the scenes. This proves that it is not quite accurate to describe them even as the subconscious. More often than not, our conscious behaviour is a projection of what remains unexpressed. Nor is it always possible to draw a line of demarcation between the two.

Emotions or instincts cannot, therefore, be totally suppressed. Pushed back in one quarter, they spring back into our behaviour from another and perhaps unsuspected quarter. Besides, experience has again and again proved that nothing but unhappiness results when we seek to suppress completely any instinctive emotion. Uncontrolled and undisciplined display of the same emotions leads to equally great unhappiness. Attempts at suppression and wild orgy of emotions are therefore both harmful to the individual and hence to human society. Art which expresses emotions and at the same time introduces order into them is, therefore, one of the constituents of civilization itself.

Freud has described the unconscious as a chaos, a cauldron of seething excitement which is impervious to the passage of time. The repressed is the region of timeless entities possessed of a vital energy which the expressed elements of human nature do not and cannot possess. This explains the universality of the appeal of the artist's work. It also helps to explain a phenomenon in social behaviour that has often baffled the psychologist. It is common experience that men, who as individuals are responsible and reasonable, behave irresponsibly and unreasonably in a mob. It is not enough to say that this is due to the absence of individual responsibility. Mob action is marked by a savagery and violence

which the mere surrender of responsibility cannot explain. Absence of responsibility may account for thoughtless and even foolish action, but not for the bestial frenzy which often characterizes men in a mob. The conception of the unconscious as unaltered by the passage of time offers a clue to the explanation of this phenomenon.

The function of art is the expression of the individual. Expression marks the passage from the unconscious to the conscious.

Expression is, therefore, simultaneously communication, though the reverse is not necessarily true. This applies even in the case of the emotions of the individual. In expressing such emotions, the individual communicates them. Since no emotion can be communicated except through its actual experience, self-expression is in such cases self-socialization. Expression of a feeling is, therefore, simultaneously the projection of the self into society. What was originally the emotion of the artist alone becomes through expression and communication the emotion of all those who share his experience. Expressed emotions are social emotions and as such civilized emotions.

In the case of unexpressed emotions—and they constitute what we mean by the term unconscious—the emotions are unexpressed and therefore unsocialized. Because they are unsocialized and private, they are not subject to any of the checks or counteracting influences imposed by society. Immune from public or private criticism, they change neither in nature nor intensity. Impervious to the passage of time, they possess the vitality and energy of primeval man. Precisely for that reason, they are characterized by a savagery which is absent in the case of all expressed and therefore socialized emotions. In a mob, surrender of individual responsibility is accompanied by a physical and psychical sympathy in which these repressed feelings are communicated without being expressed. Surrender of responsibility induces a state of mind which facilitates such psychophysical communication. Responsibility is based on self-consciousness. Surrender of responsibility results in the reduction of self-consciousness to mere sentience. The subconscious and

recalcitrant elements of our nature, therefore, come to the fore when the individual loses himself in a mob.

This would also offer an explanation of the demand for novelty in art. What has been expressed is to that extent socialized and civilized. Its repetition cannot cause in us the excitement which the expression of a hitherto untamed feeling would arouse. It is the function of the artist to bring to consciousness the unexpressed instinctual aspects of our nature. The result is to socialize and civilize them, but in the process of doing so, he cannot but disturb the conventions that have already been established. It is too much to expect that wild instincts will be tamed without struggle or conflict. The process of expressing hitherto repressed feelings cannot but release forces from that deeper level of being which is hid in the subconscious regions of our personality. Art thus disturbs the even and orderly surface of the ordinary man's conception of reality. The artist is characterized as an eternal rebel. Our social self interpolates between desire and action the procrastinating factor of thought. The aim of art is to remove this buffer and bring to experience all the immediacy and vitality of free intuitions.

Plato, who was both an artist and a philosopher, but more of a philosopher than an artist, realized this. That is why he banished artists from his Republic. He wanted to introduce into his State the order and precision of the abstract concept. His identification of the State with society only emphasized the tendency, but the fate of the artist was sealed the moment he sought to explain all experience in terms of Form and Appearance. The individual must conform to the social pattern and must not exhibit any features which in any way disturb the harmony and order of the ideal Form. What wonder then that he would banish from his Republic the artist who in his exaltation of the individual introduces an element of anarchy into the carefully arranged order of his picture? Plato condemns art because it is in general the expression of the unexpressed and undisciplined parts of our nature and as such must be discouraged in the interests of rational ideals and virtues.

This, however, is precisely the reason why an analysis of the aesthetic activity has become so important today. The anarchic and unsocialized elements in human nature cannot be simply suppressed. Any attempt to do so leads to the breakdown of the very order for whose sake Plato wanted to banish art from his ideal State. The emotions which are not expressed do not, however, die. They remain as mere brute feelings, never mastered or controlled. Concealed in the darkness of man's self-ignorance, they break upon him in orgies of passion that he can neither check nor understand.

The failure to raise psychophysical expression to conscious activity is attended by individual neuroses and social chaos. Both represent our failure to reconcile the claims of freedom and order. It is only such reconciliation that can assure the future of human progress. The function of art is to bring to consciousness the hitherto unconscious and instinctual intuitions and perceptions of man. In the process of expression, art weaves them into a fabric which can take its place in the organized life of conscious reality. Our fundamental problem today is the maintenance of the values of the individual in an ordered society. Art as the universalization of the unique has successfully solved this problem in its own sphere and holds the promise of success if its technique is extended to other fields of experience.

A critique of art must, from the very nature of the case, be a critique of imagination. The function of imagination in suggesting a way out of our present crisis becomes clear if we consider one other point. Our empirical thinking is governed by the categories imposed by the social form into which we are born. Inductive generalizations based merely on the experience of the past are not, therefore, adequate to our needs. We must transcend the mentality of the age and envisage a social order whose dynamic equilibrium charges each of the social factors with its own intrinsic potency. This cannot be done so long as we conform to ways of social thinking which are evolved, as in present-day society, out of the interplay of forces in which some are weighted as against the others. In science, progress is the result of the play

of a free imagination controlled by the requirements of coherence and logic. A method of rigid empiricism, if consistently pursued, would have left science where it found it.

Philosophy undertakes a criticism of the prevalent forms of society on the basis of the concept of a perfect and elastic social equilibrium. The accumulated experiences of the social forms of the past may contribute to the enunciation of such a concept. The concept must nonetheless be *a priori* and the result of an imaginative construction. Imagination must, therefore, penetrate beyond the encrustations of social form and discover the original ingredients out of which the social content is built. It can and must do more. It can even play with inconsistency and thus throw light on the consistent and persistent elements in experience. Reflection and analysis reveal the disastrous consequences which follow from maladjustment between social form and social content. Such maladjustments arise out of the intransigence of the individual. Imagination which fuses reason and will in the fields of beauty and morality offers a hope that the conflict can be resolved in the theoretical field as well. A critique of imagination is thus essential for a proper understanding of the central problem of our age. It is also the essential prolegomenon to any metaphysics that seeks to explain reality in all its manifestations.

1944

THE STUDY OF PHILOSOPHY

PARADOXICAL as it may sound, India, which in the past has been one of the foremost centres of philosophical study and speculation, has in recent years tended to show a diminution of interest in the study of philosophy. This is reflected by the fall in the number of students who take it up as their special subject in honours and post-graduate courses in the different Indian universities. One university, situated in an area which produced some of the greatest philosophers, not only of India but of the whole world, has severely curtailed, if not altogether abolished, the facilities for the teaching of philosophy in its faculties. Even universities which provide the necessary facilities do not attract a sufficient number of students with the necessary ability. This is in sharp contrast to the situation in universities like Oxford or Cambridge where a large number of the ablest students—irrespective of what career they intend to adopt later—take to the study of philosophy for the value of its intellectual discipline.

I have sometimes wondered why Indians, who have always been noted for their sensitive and acute intellect, and for their interest in finding out the wherefor of everything, should exhibit such disinclination for the study of philosophy. Metaphysics, with its research into first causes, and its delight in acute dialectical reasoning, would at first sight seem to be peculiarly fitted for the supple and subtle Indian intellect. Nevertheless, the fall in the number of students in the philosophical subjects cannot be gainsaid. Many of them have been attracted to other sociological studies, particularly economics which deals with the theory of money, perhaps in the mistaken hope that a theoretical knowledge of money may in some way lead to its material possession. This, however, cannot be the only cause. There must be something in the nature of the syllabus and the way studies in philosophy are

organized which fails to satisfy the young student's love of abstract knowledge or hope of worldly betterment. A restatement of the value of the study of philosophy and an analysis of some of the drawbacks and defects in existing courses may, therefore, help to remove some of the causes which today make philosophy unpopular with the younger generations.

The study of philosophy which attempts to discover and understand the first causes of things is important at any time. No culture can flourish unless it understands its own basic assumptions. They are often regarded as first principles that are self-evidently true, but reflection and analysis invariably show that they are in fact presuppositions and hypotheses which have been accepted without even realizing that they are such. So long as a culture is not faced by any inner conflict or external challenge, such a non-critical attitude is no great handicap, but when different cultures and outlooks confront and oppose one another, such tacit assumptions do not suffice. Man must in such a situation think out the implications of his attitudes and habits of thought and action, and find a justification for them in a reasoned view of experience. If he fails to do so, the clash of conflicting ideologies destroys the buttress of faith which sustains his life. Anthropologists tell us that primitive peoples die when they come into contact with a civilized people, not only because of the physical destruction they have to face, but still more because their world of belief is shattered by the impact of a more developed and self-conscious outlook. Today, when the world is gradually but inexorably coming closer, the different ideologies which different societies produced in different ages must meet one another's challenge. If modern man is unable to combine in one common synthesis the world outlooks evolved in different ages and different climes, there is little hope of the survival of any one of them. In the present crisis of the world's history, the study of metaphysics has, therefore, become an obligation which no person with any intellectual conscience can escape or deny.

All action is ultimately based on knowledge or what passes for knowledge. No one in his senses would ever frame a policy of action on what he himself knows to be error. Difficulties, however,

arise because it is not always possible to distinguish between knowledge and what passes for knowledge. If knowledge exhibited any characteristic which unmistakably distinguished it from opinion or error, the world would be a much simpler place to live in. Unfortunately, however, error and opinion, till we attain a stage of knowledge, are never recognized as such. A further complication is introduced by the fact that experience itself is a process of continuous growth. What seems to be knowledge in a particular context is later seen to be error with a widening or alteration of the context. Just as the addition of a new tint changes the tone of existing colours and subtly transforms the composition of the whole picture, the discovery of new facts tends to change the meaning and significance of facts previously perceived. The infinite complexity of experience at any one moment and the possibility of changes through the process of time demand that there must be continuous examination of the principles which operate in experience.

In a sense, such examination is the essence of Philosophy. It is not only a criticism of its own pre-suppositions, but also an effort to make explicit what is implicit in experience. Philosophy thus brings to consciousness what is unconsciously implied in our attitudes and actions. The need for such analysis is obvious if we consider the nature of human activity. Where action results from feelings, there can be no guarantee of uniformity or universality, as feelings are essentially private. Conduct or attitude based on feeling would thus tend to disrupt the structure of society. Where action is based on instinct, we can be sure of the uniformity of response among different individuals. The difficulty with instinct, however, is that it tends to the same pattern of action in the same situation. Where the situation changes, instincts are unreliable as guides to action. In the modern world, with its complexity and change, instincts cannot, therefore, offer any guarantee of uniformity of conduct or thought.

The importance of the study of philosophy in the modern world may, therefore, be taken for granted. Even then the question arises whether there is any justification for the study of

'History of Philosophy.' Some may perhaps enquire if there is any justification for the study of history of any type. Human history, in spite of many attempts to reduce it to a science, still remains a mere summation of observed instances. All attempts to frame any general law of history or to reduce it to a science have so far failed, and as far as we can judge from the nature of the case, are bound to fail. Though it is often said that history repeats itself, the statement is true only with wide qualifications. A historical situation has so many elements and so many ramifications that it is difficult, if not impossible, to apprehend it in its entire complexity. When we judge two situations to be similar, we do so only on the basis of certain observed similarities, but as many features remain outside our notice, the observed similarities can give no logical guarantee that the two situations will in fact lead to similar developments. Besides, every historical situation is a sum total of what has gone on before, and hence strictly speaking no historical situation can ever be repeated. Nevertheless, the study of history is of genuine value in understanding even contemporary events. One may go further and say that we cannot understand the present unless we understand the past, for the present is largely the result of what has happened in the past.

It is true that in the case of philosophy, there are certain features which differentiate its history from the history of events, or of science. In philosophy, each philosopher seems to start almost *ab initio* and builds up his system by criticizing, if not condemning, the work of his predecessors. In Science, subsequent workers base their theories on the findings of former scientists. Political and economic events also show the influence of preceding events. It is generally possible to trace a course of advance and development—at least over a certain specified period. We rarely find in philosophy any such sense of direction and progress. In addition, the personal factor plays an even more decisive role in the formulation of a philosophy than in the shaping of historical events. Nevertheless, all such differences are ultimately differences only in degree. One may well doubt the belief in the inevitability of progress in human affairs. Even in Science, we know that

certain truths achieved in the past have been lost to subsequent generations. On the other hand, later philosophers can and do benefit by the experience of their predecessors.

Perhaps even more important is the fact that the study of 'History of Philosophy' is in a sense integral to the study of philosophy itself. In philosophy, the object of study is the nature of knowledge and being. In order to arrive at this nature, we seek to distinguish the *what* of a thing from its *that*. *That* refers to existence, which is conditioned by space, time and causality. Philosophy thus attempts to understand the nature of objects without reference to space and time. The object of philosophy is, therefore, in a special sense timeless, and hence the history of philosophy tends to merge into philosophy. We must also remember that philosophy not only seeks to understand the timeless object, but also to make time itself the object of the analysis. In fact, philosophers may be broadly divided into two classes according to their attitude to the problem of time and change. From the earliest times, some philosophers have sought to find out the changeless entity in the midst of change, and others to reduce all reality to a flux.

There are two other reasons why the study of the history of philosophy is a necessary preparation for the study of philosophy. The history of philosophy teaches us that no belief is sacrosanct and beyond question. Acute philosophers have held passionately and with conviction to beliefs that seem to us totally absurd, and on the other hand, things which seem self-evidently true to us were rejected outright by men of the greatest intellect. The history of philosophy, therefore, encourages its students to develop an attitude which is both critical and humble: critical because the spirit of enquiry and scepticism is essential to any progress in thought, and humble because experience shows that even the greatest genius had his blind spots.

This combination of curiosity and detachment, of intellectual daring and intellectual humility develops a spirit of toleration that is important not only for the study of philosophy but also for the conduct of affairs. The consideration of alternative hypotheses and

the awareness that there may be elements of truth as well as error in either creates an attitude of mind in which we can learn to accept differences without violent revulsions of feeling. The widening of intellectual sympathies which results from such a discipline helps to create the basis of a civilized social order. Unless we can tolerate differences, we cannot recognize the value of the individual, and without recognition of the dignity of the individual, there can be no democracy, and without democracy, Society cannot be creative, free and co-operative.

While 'History of Philosophy' is thus an essential ingredient in the study of philosophy, it is curious that the study of such history as a separate discipline is not very ancient. It is true that in the old traditions of Indian or Hellenic philosophy, an individual philosopher built up his system by a statement and criticism of the position of his predecessors. Such criticism was, however, intended only to establish his own position, and naturally the philosopher chose only those aspects in the teachings of his predecessors which were relevant to his purpose. There was not, as far as one can judge, any attempt to study the development of philosophy as a systematic process. One reason for this may be that many of these ancient philosophers were primarily interested in action, while the preoccupation with understanding for its own sake is a comparatively late development. Another, and perhaps a more fundamental reason may be that philosophy till the modern period has largely developed through commentaries on either what are regarded as revealed texts or the work of some great philosopher whose writing was regarded as infallible. Even when new wine was poured into old bottles, every effort was made to induce the belief that the new wine did not differ from the old. Thus new developments had to come under the garb of amplifications or explanations of the old. It was inevitable that such an attitude with its undue reverence for authority should hamper not only the growth of individual adventures in philosophy, but also the emergence of histories of philosophy which must from the nature of the case compare and judge—sometimes favourably but sometimes adversely—all old texts, whether revealed or otherwise.

We need not enter here into a discussion as to the reasons which led to the contemporary shift of philosophical interest from ethical or ontological questions into problems of epistemology. Suffice it to say that the shift is itself evidence of the vitality of the philosophical tradition and its attempt to provide a comprehensive survey of all aspects of experience. In recent times, our knowledge has expanded in all directions. There have been great advances within particular fields simultaneously with an increase in the number of such fields. Contacts between different societies and different sciences have led to many new developments, which demand a new synthesis of all knowledge and the evolution of a new outlook. A crying demand of the modern world is, therefore, a more intensive study of philosophy and the development of a truly philosophical spirit. Never has there been a more pressing need than today for a disinterested survey of the conflicting ideologies which, unless they can be reconciled, threaten to disrupt the world we know.

It is, therefore, surprising that India should at such a juncture suffer from a lack of interest in philosophy. One cannot help feeling that this is at least in part due to defects in the organization of the syllabus and the methods of teaching in the universities. In the attempt to make the study of philosophy a purely academic discipline, the background of its social development is often overlooked. In fact, the craze for abstraction tends to deny the inter-relations between the different departments of human knowledge. Even within philosophy itself there are large gaps of knowledge which prevent a realization of its social significance. We have seen how there can be no systematic or satisfactory study of philosophy without the study of its history. Unfortunately, such study is yet in a most unsatisfactory stage. We have today specialists who are authorities on some particular philosopher of the East or the West. We also have historians of philosophy who have given more or less systematic accounts of the development of philosophy in some particular area of the world or of human thought. In spite of occasional attempts by a few adventurous spirits, we however lack even today a historian of

philosophy to trace the development of human thought on a global scale.

According to the European tradition which has been largely followed in the Indian universities, the study of philosophy begins with the Greeks. The earliest Greek philosophers take us back to the sixth century before Christ, but India and China certainly, and perhaps Egypt, had already achieved a high degree of development before this period. The philosophical standpoints of the Buddha in India, and Confucius in China presuppose many centuries of previous speculation and enquiry. There is, therefore, little doubt that systematic study of philosophy had begun in these countries at least a thousand years—if not more—before the Christian era. Greek philosophy itself contains internal evidence of influence from abroad, but our knowledge of such influence is at best rudimentary. Nor have we any knowledge of the contacts between the ancient schools of thought in China, India and Egypt and cannot, therefore, judge how far their inter-connections led to any new developments. In recent times, there have been many independent studies in the philosophical systems of India and China, though the thought of Egypt still remains largely unknown. Their antiquity is unquestioned, and it is universally admitted that they precede the development of Greek philosophy by centuries, if not millenniums, but nevertheless, even today most histories of philosophy begin the story of the development of human thought with the Greeks. This cannot but make the study of philosophy somewhat unreal to Indian students.

Equally big is the gap in our knowledge of the influence of Indian thought on Arab thought. There is general agreement that ancient Indian thought influenced the Arab conception of mathematics, chemistry and philosophy. It is possible that there are works in Arabic in which the story of such influences is still imbedded. So far as the general student of philosophy is concerned, these are, however, still largely matters of speculation. It is also known that the Arabs preserved the Greek heritage and passed it on to modern Europe. The impact of Arab thought on Europe was, therefore, full of momentous consequence, and, according to

some, was the immediate cause of the Renaissance. It is, however, not realized that a comprehensive survey of such influence is not possible without discovering in what way Arab thought had combined the elements which it inherited from Hellenic, Hebraic and Indian sources. What is still more strange is that many students of philosophy are not even aware of such gaps or of the consequences which follow from them.

In this connection it may be of some interest to refer to the *History of Philosophy* which is being sponsored by the Government of India. Maulana ABUL KALAM AZAD, at a meeting of the All-India Education Conference in 1948 proposed that the Government of India should undertake the preparation of a 'History of Philosophy' without any territorial or temporal qualifications. Such a work could alone claim to be a true history of philosophy, for it would seek to illustrate the continuity in the development of human thought without reference to any particular age or people. The state of our knowledge today is the result of the co-operation stretching over millenniums of all the peoples in the world, but for various reasons, most of the current histories of philosophy written by European or American scholars either altogether ignore or make merely passing reference to the contribution of the Orient. On the other hand, books by Indian and other Oriental scholars generally deal exclusively with either Indian or some other special school of Oriental philosophy. In consequence, the unity in the development of human thought is hardly ever grasped.

In view of past neglect, it is perhaps necessary to place a greater emphasis on the study of Indian philosophy in our universities. This also is the reason why the proposed *History of Philosophy Eastern and Western*, will embody a special reference to the value of the Indian contribution to the development of human thought. The reorganization of our university syllabuses is, however, still not fully satisfactory. Indian philosophy has no doubt found a place, but it is still treated as a special branch, and what is worse, in some cases the syllabus is so arranged that it is an alternative to some other school of philosophy. Thus in some universities,

students who take up Indian philosophy must remain ignorant of Arab philosophical thought and *vice versa*. The Indian Philosophical Congress has reorganized its divisions on the basis of subjects, and it seems that a similar reorganization of the syllabus of philosophy in Indian universities is long overdue.

The state of the study of philosophy in a country is in the end only a measure of the state of intellectual health of its people. To be alive is to think, and hence some kind of philosophy is altogether inescapable for man. The only choice is between sound philosophy and unsound. Unsound philosophy—which really means lack of philosophy—may breed a spirit of dogmatism and rigidity which would be fatal in the modern world. Even for purposes of bare survival, it is thus necessary to ensure the maintenance of a spirit of critical enquiry, intellectual humility and toleration of differences. These constitute the essence of man's philosophical quest and are in turn best developed through the pursuit of the philosophical discipline.

The need of a new philosophical renaissance is borne upon us even more inexorably by the impasse to which modern science has brought the whole of humanity. The tremendous advance of scientific knowledge is one of the most glorious achievements of the human intellect, and has for the first time in human history created conditions in which a civilized standard of life is possible for everybody. It has also brought about a liberation of the spirit by sweeping away many old superstitions and offering rational explanations of many of the mysteries of nature. Nevertheless, science itself is facing a crisis today, on account of its inner paradoxes and also because of its divorce from the values of the spirit. The destructive aspects of science have in consequence become a threat to human survival. It is this crisis in science and civilization which offers both a challenge and an opportunity to philosophy. Philosophers must attempt a transvaluation of old values by undertaking a critical examination of the old scaffoldings of faith. Then alone can we hope to raise the framework for a new temple of the human spirit.

1950

EAST AND THE PROBLEMS OF EDUCATION

BEFORE we can answer the question whether there is any absolute distinction between East and West in their concept of man or philosophy of education, we must try to understand what we mean by East and West. Obviously the distinction is in terms of geography, but even geographically the terms East and West are, and must be, relative in a global world. Every region of the world is both East and West, depending upon the location of the person who refers to it. The description of Asia as East, and Europe as West dates back from the time when men thought of the world as flat and limited. The popular description of philosophies developed in Asia as Eastern and of those in Europe as Western is a relic of the same habit of thought.

The use of the plural in referring to the philosophies that developed in Asia is a recognition of the great variety of such systems. The philosophical concepts that developed in China are often different from those that developed in India or Western Asia. Each region developed systems that have affiliations, parallelisms and contrasts. Let alone an area so vast as Asia, Indian schools of philosophy include systems which hold that the Brahman alone is real, and others for which sense experience is the only reality. Sankara and Carvaka have each a place in any history of Indian philosophy, though this fact is not always remembered.

For various reasons, into which we need not enter, many scholars have come to regard Vedanta as the type of Indian philosophy and of the many interpretations of Vedanta, the one associated with the name of Sankara as the only valid one. Consequently, to many scholars, both Indian and foreign, Sankara's views have been regarded as Indian in excelsis. At the same time, even Sankara's position has not always been correctly understood. Even today, critics are not agreed about what Sankara meant by

the concept of *maya*. Is *maya* illusion or mystery? What again was Sankara's relation to Buddhist metaphysics? Did he not, with the Buddhists, deny the transcendental reality of the world as we know it? Many today regard Sankara as a confirmed critic of Buddhist thought, but in his own age he was often held to be a disguised Buddhist.

Even if we accept the conventional view about Sankara's philosophy, there are other orthodox Indian schools which give greater recognition to the reality of the individual and his acts. In addition to the six orthodox schools, there are many heterodox schools of varying degrees of insight and influence. These systems—orthodox and heterodox—exhibit among them almost all possible variations of human thought. Not only so, but divergences between them are at times wider than those between a particular Indian and a particular European system.

The same remarks apply to the concept of man in different philosophers who have lived in what we call the West. Even within the comparatively limited field of Greek philosophy, the attitudes of Heraclitus and Parmenides to reality and man are sharply opposed. Human thought in Europe, as elsewhere, exhibits two main, but contrary, attitudes. Some thinkers have stressed permanence and regarded the flow of things as only a process distorting the hidden reality. Others have regarded change as fundamental and identified process itself with reality. Philosophers have also differed about the importance of the respective contribution of sense and understanding to our knowledge. To some, the essence of man is his rationality. Others have identified man with the stream of sense perceptions. Naturally, their concept of man has differed. These differences, however, cut across geographical barriers. We find exponents of either school in both Asia and Europe. Just as there is no single concept of man which is typically Asian, there is none which is specifically and exclusively European.

It is true that the Greeks had divided mankind into the *Hellenes* and the *barbarians*. Indians drew a similar distinction between the *Aryans* and the *Mlecchas*, and the Hebrews between *Jew* and the

Gentile. The self-chosen race had in each case a sense of its own superiority, mixed with a feeling of patronising contempt for others. It is, however, doubtful if the ancient world had articulated the distinction as one between East and West. This latter distinction is a later growth, and is largely the result of the military superiority which European nations achieved after the Renaissance through the application of science to the art of warfare.

Military superiority led to political domination by Europe, in particular by the nations of Western Europe, and encouraged the growth of a superiority complex that at times degenerated into arrogance. The Greeks, in spite of the sense of their own importance, recognized the superiority of the Egyptians and some other Eastern nations in certain fields. Hindus had similarly acknowledged the contribution of the Greeks to sculpture, military science and astronomy. Europeans till the Renaissance had admitted the excellence of the Saracens in various arts and sciences. Western Europeans of the post-Renaissance period however developed a tendency—sometimes formulated but more often tacitly assumed—to regard all human excellence as their special prerogative.

Europe, Africa and Asia—and these constituted the then known world—have influenced one another from the beginning of recorded history. What is today described as the West is based mainly on a synthesis of Greek and Hebraic elements while the East contains traces of Hellenic art as well as the impact of modern science. If a distinction is at all to be drawn between East and West, it would not perhaps be incorrect to say that the spiritual outfit of the West was furnished largely by the East, while the intellectual content of the East was partly derived from Western sources. Christianity, which has profoundly influenced Europe, originated in Asia but returned there in a European garb. The only valid conclusion then is that no concept of man can be described as exclusively Eastern or Western. In other words, the world of philosophy cannot be divided into water-tight cultural blocks.

II

One may well ask that if this be so, why should men have ever thought of East and West as distinct if not contrary manifestations of the human spirit? One answer is that human thought is largely influenced by the environment in which man finds himself and this differs in different regions of the world. Man does not think in a vacuum. The content of his thought must be derived from his experience, and his experience will be largely shaped by his natural and human environment. To take one example. The desert, with its vast brooding skies and the vast unbroken span below, tends to blur all distinctions and to impress upon the mind a sense of the unity of the universe. From this sense of unity it is one step to think of one God and one Law. This helps to explain why the most intense articulation of monotheism is found in the semitic religions.

Though we do not always see the connection, the forms of production and the relation of the different classes to the productive forces also influence the prevalent thought of a community. The longer one particular social form lasts, the stronger is its impact on the intellectual attitudes of the people. It is common experience that men following the same avocation develop a similar mentality. Agricultural communities all over the world are inclined to be tribal and parochial. The unit of life is the village community. In such a social setting, the individual's claim to independent life tends to be ignored. On the other hand, social co-operation is restricted to the members of the village group. The individual rarely if ever thinks of his relation to his country or his nation. His loyalty is more to the family or the clan than to the nation or the country. India with her dominantly agricultural economy of four thousand years or more offers an example of how this principle works. The form of her economic life, with its emphasis on the village community, worked against the growth of individualism and nationalism alike.

Let us take another example of the way in which economic organization influences outlook on life. The peasant—especially

before the discoveries of science and technology—depended for his prosperity on factors over which he had no control. He could prevent neither drought nor excess of rain. A peasant economy, therefore, developed an attitude of fatalism and resignation to fate. By contrast, communities which were commercial or industrial developed in the individual a more self-reliant, empirical and adventurous outlook. We find such differences between agricultural and commercial communities in both Asia and Europe. Mediaeval Europe, which was largely agricultural, was nearer in spirit to contemporary agricultural communities of Asia than to the industrial Europe of today. Here we have another indication that differences in outlook between peoples are due not so much to geographical location as to the stage of their social and economic development.

The influence of the social structure can be traced in some of man's most abstruse speculative efforts. It is sometimes said that what distinguishes the Indian concept of man is belief in the doctrines of *Karma* and transmigration or rebirth. They are not two doctrines, but two formulations of one fundamental principle. This principle is the application of the law of causality to human destiny. It holds that what happens to man is neither accidental nor due to the vagaries of any non-human factor. Each man is responsible for his own fate. As he has sown, so has he reaped till now, and so will he reap in the future. The consequences of his action are not exhausted in life, and hence he must be born again and again. The doctrine of *Karma* and rebirth is thus an attempt to assert man's independence of God or any other superhuman agency.

We may find parallels to the doctrine elsewhere. Some elements in the thought of Socrates present a close analogy. The doctrine as fully articulated is, however, peculiar to India. One reason why it flourished here may be found in the organization of Indian society as it unfolded itself in the wake of the Aryan immigration. The Aryans came to India in dribbles, and faced a people or peoples who were inferior in a military sense but perhaps their equal in other respects. The Aryans conquered and subjugated

them, but allowed them to survive as inferior classes in the social hierarchy. Caste developed out of this social stratification. Inequality was perpetuated by giving it an institutional basis. We may condemn caste from a humanitarian point of view, but historically we must recognize that it offered the conquered, though under conditions of privation and disability, a chance to survive.

The survival of the conquered under conditions of humiliation and misery posed difficult social problems. A hierarchical society always tends to concentrate privilege at the top. The denial of rights to the conquered leads in course of time to the denial of privilege to the less fortunate among the conquerors. Such societies must, therefore, constantly face the risk of revolt by the under-privileged who constitute the majority. Such risks are minimized if the majority are persuaded that (a) they are themselves responsible for their sad plight, and (b) can hope to improve their status in an after-life by patient submission to present misery. The doctrine of Karma satisfied both these conditions. It inculcates in the minds of the majority the belief that their misery is due to sins in a former life. It offers them the hope of future betterment through present performance of allotted tasks.

The doctrine need not be and most probably is not a conscious construction to justify existing social practice, but there is no doubt that it fitted in with the requirements of the dominating class in society. Such a class by the very fact of its status tends to be more intelligent and enterprising. Its beliefs, therefore, tend to set the tone for the whole of society. It is, therefore, not surprising that principles acceptable to the privileged class should in course of time determine the outlook of society as a whole.

The use of gunpowder in warfare offers an example of how a scientific discovery influences the course of social development. One of the bases of European feudalism was the superior military power of the Knight with his coat of armour. He was largely immune from the attack of the common foot-soldier till gunpowder destroyed his immunity. Gunpowder thus contributed to the overthrow of the feudal system directly, and indirectly

helped in the growth of a spirit of democracy by establishing equality of risks among all combatants. The decay of feudal institutions created conditions for the emergence of new ideas more suited to the new social set-up.

The conclusion then is that differences in the concept of man in different countries or times are not intrinsic, but functions of differences in their social organization and development. That such differences should come to be regarded as intrinsic or immutable can be explained only by man's tendency to identify a thing with its name. Nominalism is no longer a fashionable mode of thought, but its influence still persists in unexpected ways. Without names, man would not be able to use concepts, and without concepts he could not organize his experience. Human energy is limited while the objects that claim his attention are many. He must therefore, classify and label so that he may bring an unlimited number of instances under a single rule. Since he can do so only by the use of names, he thinks that he has understood a thing when he is able to name it.

It is then not surprising that the name is often taken to be the reality. In ancient modes of philosophy, whether Eastern or Western, we find a tribute to the power of words in phrases which identify the word—*śabda* or *logos*—with the reality itself. In course of time, men discovered that the value of words is mainly instrumental, but the power of names could not be so easily shaken. If we want proof of this, we need only refer to the slogans which still dominate human attitudes and actions.

The fact that ancient societies developed in isolation from one another helped to perpetuate the nominalist fallacy. On account of difficulties of communication, societies in different regions were often unaware of one another's existence. Absence of contacts made the co-existence of different stages of civilization, and hence of different kinds of world outlook, possible. It was also natural that these outlooks should be described in terms of the regions in which they flourished. Once an outlook or attitude was given a geographical label, it was an easy step to identify it with the region.

III

On general grounds we may therefore say that no concept of man is peculiarly Eastern or Western. We come to the same conclusion if we consider philosophical traditions which are regarded as characteristically Eastern or Western. It is often said that the Eastern philosopher tends to give an important, if not the central, role to intuition as a way of knowledge, while the Western philosopher is more inclined to bring all cognitive claims to the test of rational and empirical qualifications. No Indian school of systematic philosophy—whether orthodox or heterodox—accepts a theory which fails to satisfy the test of logic. Some of the greatest names in Western philosophy, Plato and Kant, give intuition a central place in their philosophical systems. Again, it is said that the Western philosopher is more concerned with *thinking about*, and the Eastern with *realization of*, reality. This may be true in some cases, but there are also Eastern philosophers whose main concern is to *think about*, and Western philosophers who regard knowledge as only a *means to the realization of*, reality. Similarly, if there are Eastern philosophers who regard the highest knowledge as not amenable to verbal expression and communication, there are also Western philosophers who, like Wittgenstein, regard true knowledge as inexpressible.

The degree of control over the forces of nature has also influenced man's outlook in different countries or ages. In all primitive societies man is subject to forces which he can neither understand nor control. Such societies tend to think of man as a plaything of fate. Agricultural societies show some increase in man's control over nature, and bring with it an increasing sense of man's importance. Without the art of irrigation, agricultural man was still subject to the vagaries of the weather, and hence fatalism was an important element in his mental attitude. With the advance of scientific knowledge he gains in power over nature, and develops greater self-assurance. He is no longer content to be a victim of fate, but seeks to become master of his own destiny. There is a corresponding change in his attitude. This is due to a

change in the state of his knowledge but in course of time comes to be regarded as an intrinsic characteristic of the society to which he belongs.

Even man's discontent with things as they are varies with variations in the degree and extent of his power over nature. Driven by an urge for progress, he always seeks to improve on the present. When his control over the surrounding world was limited and he understood little of the secrets of nature, his discontent often expressed itself in a mood of philosophical pessimism. Hebrew prophets and Hindu sages alike spoke of the transience of life and the impermanence of earthly pomp and glory. With the progress of scientific knowledge, the same 'divine discontent' found a different expression among the philosophers and scientists of Renaissance Europe. Their dissatisfaction with the existing world led to an attempt to wrest the inmost secrets of nature and mould the world nearer to their heart's desire.

This attempt to master nature released hidden energies which enabled a handful of Western Europeans to dominate the world for more than two centuries. This domination was not only in the political field, but also in all activities which we loosely describe as spiritual. Europe's adventurousness and initiative, her faith in human reason, her quest for truth and her endeavour to alleviate suffering wherever it exists are all based upon the power which superior knowledge gives. These achievements are a proud heritage for all men. If then in recent times there has been a revolt against European leadership, this has been on account of the tendency to make superior knowledge the basis of political domination and racial exclusiveness. It must however be pointed out that the revolt itself owes much to the work of some of the finest spirits among the European peoples.

It is thus only in recent centuries that we find a difference in outlook, temper and energy of man in Europe and elsewhere. To conclude from this that there are intrinsic differences between East and West is not justified. The eclipse of non-European countries was due to their dependence on agriculture and their lack of scientific knowledge and technical know-how. The

spread of scientific knowledge is however tending to obliterate these and other disparities. Regions which were isolated and developed along different lines have now been brought close to one another in space and in time. Such proximity brings with it the risk of conflict, if not disaster, unless gross inequalities between individuals and societies are removed by the establishment of a common outlook and common standards.

The physical conditions for such development have been established. In the past, man's knowledge of the world was limited and attempts at establishment of unity were also limited in nature and scope. This was generally between adjoining regions and confined to the elite who found a basis of co-operation in common intellectual and spiritual interests. Today the co-operation must be among all men in all regions. By the middle of the nineteenth century, the known world and the geographic world were coextensive. The conquests of science made men in distant regions one another's neighbours. Political and economic relations have thus been established between peoples who have no consciousness of common ties. Science has at the same time placed in their hands a power that is capable of destroying the world if not wisely used. Increasing power with growing unification of the world makes man's action and its repercussions literally global. Unity to be effective must therefore also be global. The modern world must prosper or perish together.

Technologically, industrially and economically, the world has been unified through the achievements of science. Psychologically, emotionally and politically man has not however yet attained unity. Intellectually, he recognizes that he cannot harm others without harming himself and that when he does good to others he does himself good. Intellectual recognition has not however been accompanied by a comparable change in the modes of his conduct. He still fights his fellows in the name of human reason and the social good.

This paradox is due to the fact that his knowledge of the world outside is not matched by his knowledge of the inner self. Passions

sweep over him that he cannot understand. When in company with his fellows, he often behaves in a way unimaginable to him when acting alone. The mass hysteria which sweeps over him reveals in his nature a potentiality for evil of which he was quite unaware before the event. Never has the realization been so poignant that there are unplumbed depths in human nature that man can ignore only at his peril.

The nineteenth century was the age of militant rationalism. The triumphs of science led men to believe that the education of the intellect would lead to a change of the heart and allow all men to meet on the common level of rationality. That hope has not been realized. This has induced in some a curious sense of helplessness and an attitude of fatalism reminiscent of days when man had no control over the forces of nature. Increasing knowledge of external nature helped man to overcome his primitive fatalism. It may be that increasing knowledge of man's inner nature will help him to conquer the fatalism of the modern age.

IV

Education seeks to give the individual knowledge of himself, his fellows and his environment. Knowledge of the inner as well as the outer world is thus a function of education. Since man cannot live by himself, the aim of all systems of education, whether of East or West, is to help individuals become better members of their community. Systems of education have therefore varied with differences in social organization and placed a greater emphasis on one or other element in human nature.

Differences that are at first only in emphasis lead, in course of time to the neglect of some vital element in man's nature. To take one example. In ancient India, education sought to achieve the four-fold goals of Kama, Artha, Dharma and Moksha. So long as Indian society was healthy and vital all the four aims had their due importance. As the nation's vigour declined, there was a shift in emphasis, and gradually an ascetic spirit became dominant in society. It sought to glorify the spirit at the expense of

achievements on the worldly plane. As the social outlook changed, the character of Indian education also changed. The emphasis shifted from an active to a contemplative life. Conformity to traditions and reverence for authority were regarded as higher values than intellectual curiosity and independence of outlook. Submissiveness and contentment were dignified as spiritual values forgetful of the fact that passivity and quiescence often pass for spirituality. One curious result of this so-called spirituality is seen in a tendency to withdraw within oneself and shun all manifestation of external activity. In the sequel, Indian education tended to glorify exercise of the intellect—perhaps not even of the intellect but of the memory—at the cost of the other human faculties. Emphasis on the mental induced an attitude of indifference to, if not contempt for, all manual work.

The experience of Europe offers a contrary example of how undue stress on one element leads to a distorted view of education. Plato believed that education should lead to a harmonious development of mind and body and placed equal emphasis on mathematics, music and gymnastics as educative media. This ideal was never consciously challenged, but in course of time the emphasis shifted to the development of the intellect. The astonishing triumphs of science since the beginnings of the Renaissance encouraged Europe to apply the methods of scientific enquiry to the problems of human personality, without enquiring whether such methods are always applicable. The essence of the scientific method is its indifference to the particular instance. The essence of personality is that each individual is a distinct centre of self-consciousness.

A theory of education formulated under the influence of science tended to treat the individual as an instance of a law or a unit of a standard series. Human society was regarded as a conglomeration of units. Social relations were sought to be explained on the analogy of physics. It was thought that individuals and their contractual relations correspond to atoms and their gravitational relations. From this it was deduced that competition is the principle governing social progress. It was held that if each

individual pursued his own ends, the ends of society would be served automatically. Social good was regarded as the resultant of the pursuit of enlightened self-interest by the individual.

While the aim of science is to establish universal laws, these are sought to be based on the facts of concrete experience. Education in Europe was influenced both by the rationalist impulse and the practical bias of science. The rationalist impulse expressed itself in an emphasis on abstract intellection. The practical bias is seen in the constant effort to improve the material conditions of life. This humanitarian element in the European concept of education was reinforced by the growth of the biological sciences. As a result of these developments, theories of social contract were gradually replaced by the concept of society as an organism.

The recognition of the organic character of society did not however have an immediate influence upon the principles or methods of education. Even today we do not fully recognize that co-operation has been as potent a factor as competition in man's survival in the struggle for existence. An organic conception of society has led to a change in our concept of the individual and helped us to appreciate his infinite complexity. It is therefore increasingly recognized that education which aims at the development of personality must allow for the unfolding not only of his intellect but also of his feelings and imagination.

V

We, therefore, need a reorganization of education which will cater to the needs of *homo sapiens* as well as *homo faber*. This does not mean that educational methods and standards must be the same for all. It only means that they must be comparable. The application of science and technology to the field of production has proved that the prosperity of nations depends upon the state of their knowledge. It has at the same time created conditions in which the good things in life can be made available to all. Mechanical devices can remove much of the drudgery of life. The world can today look forward to an economy of plenty

in place of the economy of want which has ruled till now. Among individuals, the rich and the poor do not make good friends. This is equally true of nations. Comparable prosperity of different nations is therefore a condition of international understanding and the key to such prosperity lies in comparable educational standards.

The condensation of the world as a result of advance in technology thus demands a greater approximation in the ideals and methods of education. Such approximation must not, however, be at the cost of suppressing individual variations and needs. Within national systems of education, we have realized the need to provide more diversified courses to suit the tastes and aptitudes of individual pupils. It is equally necessary to provide for diversity among different national systems. While scientific progress tends to reduce economic and political differences among peoples, it encourages greater diversity in the cultural field by releasing energies from the bare struggle for existence. The greater the margin above want, the more varied are man's tastes and interests. Scientific progress does not, therefore, connote standardization of culture and still less cultural imperialism. All that we need, and ought to strive for, is to ensure that all values achieved by man in the course of his long history are available to all.

The lessons of history impress upon us that education to be fully effective must be for the whole man. It must offer scope for the development, simultaneously and in proper balance, of his body and mind, of his intellect and his imagination. This is what educational reformers have been trying to do for the last hundred years or more. Many Western educationists have pointed out the importance of activity as an element in training the very young. Theories which identified education with the imparting of information have been and are yielding to the idea of education as an active drawing out of the best in the individual. About fifty years ago, Tagore said that true education must allow the child freedom to develop in close association with nature. Gandhi sought to give to the activity of the child a socially useful end. All these experiments, Eastern and Western, stress that education

should not be regarded as a mere intellectual discipline, but a discipline of the whole man.

In the past, education has sometimes ignored the relation of the individual to society. This made education abstract and comparatively unreal. It also failed to evoke the interest of the young. A concrete situation is more easily grasped by a child and helps to bring out his qualities of feeling, imagination and thought. When dealing with abstract entities, the child often falls back on his power of memorizing. That is why the new educational experiments in the West, and those of Tagore and Gandhi in India lay so much emphasis upon activity. Learning by doing arouses the child's interest and also makes him realize the consequence of what he does.

Society must, from its nature, be served by different individuals with different abilities and different functions. Emphasis on the social character of education (a) helps to develop a spirit of co-operation, (b) leads to the recognition that differences in function cannot be equated with differences in value and importance, and (c) softens the rigid distinction between intellectual and manual discipline. Technical education was once regarded as a craft, or at most an acquisition of skill in a particular trade or industry. Today, technical education is being recognized as education in the fullest sense of the term, provided the social significance of the craft is kept in view. In a country like India, this new conception of education is bringing a new recognition of the dignity of labour.

New education must also emphasize, as perhaps never before, the intimate inter-relation of individual societies to the larger society of mankind. Never before have nations been brought so close to one another. Today whatever happens in any part of the globe immediately affects all. A nation can ignore what happens outside its borders only at its peril. Gone are the days when a society or nation could withdraw within its own frontiers, and pursue with greater or less success the course of its own development. Education throughout the world must therefore pay increasing importance to international affairs.

Men and women of one country must seek to know and understand the problems of their fellows in other countries. The first step towards this is the removal of misconceptions. One source of misconception is the concept of race. Anthropology tells us that there are no innate differences between races and many anthropologists regard the very concept of race as a myth. All anthropologists however agree that differences that have evolved over long stretches of time in response to different requirements in the situation have led to the emergence of distinct ethnic groups. Two things follow from this. Characteristic differences are not absolute or immutable and can and do change in course of time. On the other hand, any attempt to deny or suppress them abruptly is fraught with grave risks.

Another source of misunderstanding is defective teaching of history and geography. Till now, they have generally been taught from a narrow national point of view. History has often meant a glorification of one's own country. Geography has tended to regard one's own country as the centre of the world. This has often been accompanied by a corresponding underestimation of other peoples or lands. If we are to avoid the danger implicit in such practice, we must revise our conception of history and geography. History must no longer mean a mere knowledge of the political relations of different peoples. Such relations are in any case full of the record of conflict and struggle. We must now recognize that more fundamental than the tale of wars is the story of the long and far-flung co-operation by which man has attained his present state. No one knows who discovered fire, but its use is one of the basic facts of human life. The names of the men who discovered paper and printing are unknown, but the results of their discoveries belong to the common inheritance of man. We have no knowledge of the individual or the people who first discovered the art of agriculture, or of navigation, or of transport. But who can deny that these discoveries have made a far greater difference to the quality of human life than the most far-flung conquests of the most famous kings?

In one of his most exquisite stories, Anatole France tells us how

Pontius Pilate dwelt on many cherished memories of his governorship of Judea but could not remember the name of Jesus, an insignificant visionary who had been crucified to appease the orthodox Jews! This is perhaps an extreme case, but can we deny that we have generally failed to give proper value to the achievements of peace? There are thousands of instances where a discovery—by design or accident—by some individual or group has led to a permanent enrichment of the human heritage and yet found no mention in the annals of man. Once an insight has been achieved, it becomes in course of time the possession of all minds. Once a technique has been discovered, it improves the quality and volume of production throughout the world. Such achievements and discoveries constitute the real story of man's co-operation with his fellows and must form the basic stuff of history.

Our knowledge of the nature of man is still inadequate but we have repeatedly seen how ideas influence men and shape the course of history. The problem of education in the modern world is to develop in men attitudes which will lead them to work for the common good. They will not, perhaps cannot, do so unless they are at peace within themselves. There can be no integrated society without integrated individuals and no peace for the world without integrated societies. Individual and social integration depends upon the formulation of common ideals, and it is only through education that these ideals can become a part of the mental make-up of all men.

Even in a well-knit and homogeneous community, individuals differ from one another widely. Such differences do not however lead to conflict as there are certain assumptions which are common to all members of that group. Societies must evolve a similar substratum of common ideals. They can be indicated only in very general terms, and must among others include the following values:—

- (a) Physical well-being for all,
- (b) Economic sufficiency guaranteeing the conditions of survival to all,

- (c) Freedom from domination in economic, political, social or cultural matters and
- (d) The freedom of each individual or group to develop to its full capacity without infringing upon the rights of others.

Since human attitudes and aptitudes are not immutable and fixed, they can be changed through a proper educative process. Education can therefore create the conditions for and serve as the medium of co-operation between the prevalent cultures of the world. In addition, education must in the modern world serve as an agent for bringing about progress without violence. There is no society which is not in a state of continual change. External events and internal processes are continually transforming the character and composition of individuals as well as societies. The vitality of an individual or a society can be best measured by its capacity to respond to external and internal stimuli. To live is to change. Too abrupt a change can however lead to disruption of unity. In such cases, individuals and societies not only change, but disintegrate.

It is the function of education to develop an attitude which will facilitate progress without violent upheavals or abrupt breaks. In the past, man's inheritance was often limited to only the achievements of his own forbears. Today, the unification of the world has made him the inheritor of all that has happened to man in every age and clime. He is able today to survey the rise and fall of societies through centuries, and learn from history that willing acceptance of change is a condition, not only of progress but of survival. Education in the modern world must therefore foster in man a spirit of toleration and resilience; toleration which seeks to integrate all values achieved by all civilizations into one common heritage for man, and resilience which enables him to meet the challenge of each new situation with a new and creative response.

1952

REFLECTIONS ON GANDHIAN THOUGHT AND PRACTICE

RARELY, if ever, has a member of a subject nation achieved such position and prestige in his contemporary world as Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi. He was honoured in India and abroad not only as a great statesman and political leader but as a leader of thought with a new message for mankind. Even those who sought to oppose or condemn him could not deny the power of his personality. There are among his admirers some who believe that his power and influence were derived from spiritual and super-normal sources which defy analysis. Such belief, whether justified or not, is irrelevant in a discussion of his significance in the affairs of man. Whatever its origin, his influence operated on the plane of material facts and natural events. The strength of Mahatma Gandhi must therefore be understood in human terms.

Gandhi's revolutionary significance lies in his success in releasing the energies contained in the endurance of the Indian people. It has often been said that the Indian masses lack energy and initiative. They submit to wrongs or suffer hardships which a more active people would have opposed and conquered. Their passivity and inertia have been regarded as a source of weakness by friends and foes alike. Before Gandhi's advent, it was believed that the character of the Indian masses was such that there was hardly any possibility of an active and dynamic revolution in India. Gandhi did not quarrel with facts. He sought to use them for his own purposes and to transmute the weakness itself into a source of strength. He accepted the fatalism and passivity of the Indian people but found for them a new political function. Instead of an aggressive and militant struggle, he built up a movement of non-cooperation in which the passivity and endurance of the Indian masses were turned into sources of strength and energy.

This use of what was regarded as a defect brought about a change in the texture of the Indian mind. Once the static forces were released, the masses revealed unsuspected reserves of energy and dynamism. Gandhi was not however content to bring about such a change in India alone. He believed that he had a message for the entire world. He regarded the search for truth as the mission of his life and described all his activities as experiments with truth. The attempt to reintegrate the social and political outlook of India was thus only one phase of the Gandhian experiment with truth. His more fundamental urge was to evolve a new conception of society and the State for the whole world. He sought to reconcile the traditions of the Indian people with the requirements of the modern age and find in this reconciliation a solution of the ills of the modern world. His claim to leadership in thought is based on this outline of a new philosophy of life and action.

When Gandhi appeared, it was the age of domination of the West which had launched the modern era of scientific advance. It had opened to man a new world of immense possibilities. On the material plane, it had led to an unprecedented development in technology. On the intellectual plane, it gave rise to nineteenth-century rationalism and promised that with the spread of education, all human ills would be resolved. On the political plane, its finest expression seemed to be liberal democracy in the Nation State. Europe was full of the spirit of expansion, buoyancy and faith in reason, and wherever Europe led, the rest of the world followed. Following some of the most perceptive thinkers of Europe, Gandhi challenged the easy acceptance of European supremacy. He declared that the traditional modes of Western thought had led to a dead end. He therefore sought a way out of the prevailing political and social impasse through his experiments with truth.

The cause of Europe's malaise was her inability to profit by her own experience. The eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries taught men that political freedom often conceals economic slavery of the worst type. Political democracy had permitted the employment of children under twelve in hard labour for sixteen

continuous hours. Not only permitted, but defended such exploitation on the plea of freedom of contract and the right of the individual to sell his labour as he liked. Lawyers, politicians, doctors and even bishops had come forward to justify it on legal, political, medical and religious grounds. Such iniquity could not continue indefinitely, and early in the nineteenth century, the demand arose for limiting the so-called freedom of contract. That the State must assure the individual not only the forms of political liberty but the content of economic freedom became the new battle-cry.

Men of moral genius had anticipated this battle-cry, but it is only since the nineteenth century that it has been increasingly recognized that only a State which guarantees freedom from want and fear can claim the allegiance of man. While the recognition of the end was almost universal, the agreement disappeared when men thought in terms of ways and means to realize that end. The liberal rationalist saw the possibility of progress in the improvement of existing modes of production and the general extension of education and the franchise. The socialist repudiated the individual's right to profit at the cost of the community and sought the millennium by a gradual transformation of prevalent social forms through the extension of the power of the State. The philosophical anarchist found the promise of a new heaven in his ideal of abolition of the State.

All these modes of thought left their mark on Gandhi's mental make up. Their conflict and discrepancy provoked him to attempt his own synthesis. His philosophy of life evolved as a result of his attempt to reconcile these conflicting claims against the background of Indian history and tradition. This integration of Western cross-currents into an Indian background explains the revolutionary possibilities in Gandhi's social and political thought.

The experience of the modern world proves that the total rejection of industrial and machine civilization is altogether impossible. The application of science to the satisfaction of our needs is helping us to overcome climatic and physical disabilities. Applied science may at first serve only a few in society but

invariably its application is extended. Ultimately it can and often does benefit every single individual of the world. The machine is intrinsically a common servant of man. Only its misuse can lead to private benefit at the cost of the community. Use of the machine leads to increase of common wealth and its abuse to concentration of wealth in single hands. This, however, is not the fault of the machine but of the men who abuse it and degrade men. Gandhi at times went to extreme lengths in his condemnation of the machine, but if we separate the essence of his thought from its occasional exuberance, we shall find that his repugnance to the machine was not a repudiation of the machine as such but only a protest against the debasement of humanity.

A little reflection makes this clear. The spinning wheel and the oil press are also machines. No doubt, they are small and worked through human or animal power, but this does not change their character as machinery. It was therefore not the nature of machinery but the experience of its use till now which made Gandhi suspicious. One may add that without certain fundamental changes in the nature of society, there is some justification for his suspicion of large-scale machinery. When the machine is worked by human power, it is directly under human control. Even the possibility of its abuse is strictly limited. With large-scale machinery it is different. Man himself tends to become a cog in the machine. In any case, it develops an impersonal character in which the human element may easily be overlooked. As the scale of production increases through increasing mechanization, the process tends to become more important than the produce or even the producer. Slowly the machine dehumanizes man.

It was this danger inherent in large-scale industrialization that led Gandhi to conceive of the autonomous and self-contained village as the unit of society. He held that, as far as possible, every village must regulate its own economic and political life. In such small units, the human relationship between individuals would be strong. It could never be replaced by merely mechanical and impersonal relationships. In village communities there would thus be scope for individual freedom. The human relationship

would at the same time ensure that there was no risk of its degeneration into licence or anarchy. The absolute dictatorship of the State and the absolute anarchy of statelessness are both attended with many risks. In the small village community, men could avoid both these dangers and develop a genuine democracy.

A new type of human culture must, however, avoid the defects inherent in rural economy and the pitfalls revealed in the working of city civilization. The petty jealousies and wastefulness of village life as well as the indifference and soulless aridity of urban existence must be overcome if the individual is to achieve the full measure of his personality. The village is personal and intimate to the point of interference with one's private life. The city is impersonal and indifferent to the point of callousness. The defects of both must be avoided if the future civilization of the world is to permit the free growth of the individual in a free society.

In the past, expansion in the scale of production inevitably led to an expansion in the size of cities. Man's limited power required aggregation in large numbers to make an increase in the standard of life possible. Higher standards depended upon more commodities and more commodities upon larger units of production. So long as man depended upon human or animal muscles, water-power or even steam as the main source of energy, this could not perhaps be avoided. Today, with the substitution of electricity for steam as the main source of energy, and the emergence of atomic and other new forms of power, the concentration of multitudes in industrial towns and slums is no longer inevitable. Electricity makes the distribution of industry over a large area possible. It offers a possibility of restoring conditions analogous to those which obtained in the days of rural crafts. It may, if used with vision, enable man to combine the finest elements in the rural and the civic cultures of the past. Atomic power further underlines this possibility. Rich human relations can now be combined with increase in the riches of the world. Deep emotional vitality side by side with conditions of plenty for everybody can release human energies for new creative ventures. A dim awareness of

such possibilities was perhaps a factor behind Gandhi's insistence upon decentralization of industry and creation of small and autonomous units.

Experience of European civilization made Gandhi realize the importance of the economic independence of the individual. Without it, political independence often becomes a mockery and democracy a mere form. He also saw that undue concentration of wealth undermines the economic independence of the individual, and yet follows almost inevitably from large-scale production under private proprietary right. His analysis so far was identical with that of the socialists. His solution was, however, different from theirs. The socialist remedy was and is to eliminate private property while Gandhi sought the solution in voluntary limitation of wealth and measures for controlling accumulation of property through the dispersal of industry.

The difference in the socialist and the Gandhian solution is not difficult to understand. Socialists are prepared to impose equality—political and economic and social—by violence if necessary. Gandhi, on the other hand, held that equality which is the basis of economic independence must be achieved through peaceful and non-violent methods. Political liberty may be and has often been achieved through bloody revolution. In Gandhi's opinion, this brought the form but not the substance of freedom. Those who have taken to the sword have more often than not perished by the sword. Besides, the results of a violent revolution are always liable to be lost by a violent counter-revolution. It was because of his awareness of this danger that Gandhi urged that the economic and political freedom of man must be attained through a conquest of hatred. What is achieved by persuasion is less likely to be upset by force.

II

Gandhi was thus essentially a child of his age and influenced by the prevailing thought of the day though he was not a systematic reader of other people's thought. He was an inheritor of the liberal

tradition, and regarded personal liberty as one of the greatest values in life. With the philosophical anarchist, he believed that the State should interfere as little as possible with the individual. He also believed in the tradition of collectivization inherent in socialist thought and believed that one cannot live a truly human life without sharing things with others. He imbibed all these teachings but he gave a new turn to everything he learnt. He believed in personal liberty but felt that rights accrue only from the performance of duties. He was in favour of decentralization but not in favour of the abolition of the State. He believed that the good things of life must be shared but he was not prepared to accept the method of violence often advocated by socialists to achieve this goal. In fact he was in favour of complete abjuration of violence as an instrument for achieving any objective.

Gandhi abjured violence but at the same time he was essentially a fighter. When the movement launched by him was described as passive resistance, he insisted that it was not passive resistance but Satyagraha. Satyagraha literally means impulse or movement towards the truth. (Satya = truth, Agraha = impulse, desire or movement.) In his view, passive resistance is negative while Satyagraha is positive. It is a going out to challenge and resist evil but without resorting to force which is itself an evil. Satyagraha is thus opposition to evil by not another evil, but the good. Gandhi was thus a fighter but a fighter in a non-violent way. He believed in peace but not in passivism. He was convinced that his methods held not only for India or other Oriental countries which are supposed to be passive in spirit, but also for the Western countries with their tradition of energy and activism.

Gandhi shared with the West its intellectual energy and impatience of evil but he abjured violence because of his understanding of the spirit of the modern age. He was one of the first to recognize that violence has become futile in the modern world. Scientific development has in recent years reached a stage where violence has become self-defeating. If persisted in, it threatens the very survival of man. He recognized this truth not only intellectually but made it one of the basic principles of his conduct. His

insistence that human affairs must be based on this recognition is perhaps his most significant contribution to modern thought.

Gandhi's recognition that violence is outmoded in the modern world makes him one of the first examples of a pure politician. Most politicians, regardless of what they may say, act on the principle, 'If I cannot persuade, I must compel.' The resort to force is therefore a possibility which few politicians are prepared to rule out. This applies equally to politicians in free and subject countries. In a free country, a politician who cannot get his way otherwise is often prepared to resort to violence. This he does equally readily in imposing his (which he generally regards, perhaps quite honestly, as his country's) will on another country, even if the result be war. In a subject country, the politician, if he cannot gain his freedom through persuasion, seeks to overthrow the government by military action. Such politicians are, therefore, in fact militarists-cum-politicians. Gandhi ruled out such resort to force and said that his method must always and unreservedly be one of persuasion. His strategy was thus based on political action and in no circumstances on military action. He wanted to rule out violence and the use of brute force, but he was not averse to the use of moral pressure. In fact the essence of his method was non-violent resistance to evil.

Gandhi did not, however, stop at this stage. He came to recognize that not only is violence futile but even political action has serious limitations. He was, therefore, one of the first to recognize that many problems of the modern world cannot be solved by mere political action. He realized that evils must be removed before there can be peace. The removal of such evils requires the resolution of tensions within the individual and among individuals belonging to the same community. International tensions are very often the reflection of internal tensions, just as tensions within society are often due to tensions within the individual.

Gandhi placed an immense emphasis on the importance of the individual. People at times wondered how a man who was guiding the destiny of millions found so much time for the

individual needs of insignificant men and women who sought his advice or help. The answer is to be found in his respect for the individual. He held that every individual who solves his own internal tensions becomes thereby an integrated personality. Such an individual becomes a dynamo of power and radiates energy all around. He therefore sought to train a body of men and women who would have no personal tensions and would thus help to resolve problems within society. Once tensions within society were lessened, it would help to lessen international tensions as well.

Gandhi's regard for the individual is also seen in his emphasis on education and training. He held that there is no limit to what a person can achieve through proper and systematic development of his personality. That is why he gave so much time and thought to the concept of Basic education. The aim of Basic education is to develop the individual as an integrated personality. It attempts to overcome the gulf between work and knowledge and treat the individual, not as an isolated entity but as a member of a community or group. It sees personal welfare as a part of social welfare and seeks not merely to impart instruction but to evoke creative responses which will develop the individual as a member of a cooperative community.

It may sound paradoxical to those who have not made a close study of Gandhi's thought, but the truth is that, in essence, his attitude is comparable to that of a scientist. He was an objective student of reality and his method was essentially experimental. This was due partly to his unceasing search for the truth and partly to his intuitive perception of the continual changes which go on in the individual and in society. This is evident not only in the conduct of his personal life but also in the great political movements that he launched. It is significant that he never repeated a movement. Every one of his movements fixed upon some new symbol and took up some new issue. In the 1919-20 movement, his emphasis was on non-violent non-cooperation. In 1930, salt became the symbol of opposition to Government. In 1940, defiance of the law against the assembly of people was the symbol

he chose. In 1942, he raised the slogan of 'Quit India' and asked the people to dare all in a supreme effort. He would not however deviate from non-violence, and the motto of the struggle was, *Do or die*.

Gandhi was continually experimenting, for he was conscious that changing situations and circumstances require different solutions. His techniques therefore continually changed though his basic principles remained the same. It is this flexibility that makes his techniques applicable to situations outside India. When he recognized that within India itself, a technique could not be repeated blindly, how can his techniques be transferred bodily and without change to another country and another people? Unless this fact is clearly recognized, there is a danger that in an attempt to apply his techniques to a foreign situation without change, their applicability itself may be brought into question. On the other hand, his techniques acquire an international significance if his experimental and scientific outlook governs their application.

Since the beginning of the nineteenth century and still more so in its later decades, the Indian intellectual had been dazzled by the achievements of the West. He therefore sought to transplant wholesale the culture of Europe to the Indian soil. He hardly thought in terms of synthesis, for synthesis implies mutual give and take. He held that India had little to give; her function was only to receive. By the time of Gandhi's advent, this mood had changed. In any case, he was too much of a realist to attempt the impossible, and did not believe that it would do India good to become an ersatz Europe. He therefore sought to revive the ancient traditions of India and demanded that political workers must in mode of conduct and life, speech and thought, habit and clothing, food and habitation, identify themselves with the starving, naked and illiterate masses of Indian humanity. His own mode of life was hardly distinguishable from that of the Indian peasant. Many scoffed at him in India and abroad. The description 'Naked Fakir' was applied to him in derision, but those who scoffed did not then realize that his decision was a stroke of genius.

The response of the masses was unprecedented and almost

unbelievable. They were prepared to follow him wherever he led but Gandhi was too cautious to attempt more than one step at a time. He believed in training and led them stage by stage till they were hardened to face the most difficult tasks. He appeared at a time when political activity in India was largely restricted to petitions and prayers. He sought to develop the power of resistance among the people so that there would be a sanction behind their demands. His first call was to overcome their fear of arrest and imprisonment. In retrospect, this may seem an easy step. Imprisonment for a political cause brings a halo of martyrdom in contemporary India and we hardly remember the fear and shame which jail life had for the average Indian forty years ago.

Once the fear of jail had disappeared, Gandhi felt the time had come for the next step. He then sought to free the people from fear of loss of property and all that it connotes. The third and final step in strengthening the fibre of the nation was the most difficult. The fear of jail had been overcome. Large numbers had learnt to conquer the love of property. A generation had grown up who refused to be daunted by the threat of poverty. It was however another matter to risk one's life. Gandhi sought to test the transformation in Indian character at first with selected individuals and finally with the people as a whole. The last mass movement he launched for Indian political freedom had as its slogan, *Do or die*. It is worth noting that even the urgency of what he regarded as the final struggle could not make him say, *Kill or die*.

The emphasis on education and training derived from Gandhi's respect for the individual. He believed in winning over the individual by persuasion and not by compulsion. From one point of view, he was therefore perhaps the supreme propagandist of his age. He showed what tremendous power righteous and truthful statement can have on the individual as well as on the group. In a way, he is therefore a pioneer in the field of psychological warfare, and showed what effect it can have if it is rightly used. He however set one limitation to his propaganda. He insisted that it should never resort to untruth or even half-truths. He believed that

untruth is the greatest evil and harms both the propagator of the lie and the listener. He certainly wanted to undermine the morale of his opponent by appealing to his sense of truth and by reserving the suffering for himself, but he made it a condition that his action must not cause injury or even hurt the self-respect of those who opposed him. It is obvious that this civilized code of conduct was possible only because of his conviction that his opponent was equally with him a moral agent.

One may go further and say that Gandhi had not only respect but love for his adversaries. Their opposition never provoked him to bitterness, for he held that he and his opponents were all searching for the truth. Differences and bitterness arise only when this is not fully realized, but so long as the quest for truth is sincere, the differences can be resolved and there should be no bitterness. This faith explains Gandhi's fearlessness and toleration. He was fearless because he believed that the truth must prevail and his own life was of little consequence. He was full of toleration as he regarded his opponent as a companion in the common search for truth.

III

Gandhi was not a theorist but essentially a man of action. He never asked a person to do anything which he was not prepared to do himself. Sometimes he made demands which were difficult, but he held that if through training and self-discipline he had made himself capable of fulfilling that demand, there was no reason why others should not do the same. Training and self-discipline are essential for the purpose, and he believed that the first task of a reformer was the reorientation of education. Very rightly however he drew a distinction between instruction and education. He said that education is the creative response of the individual to the environment in which he finds himself, while instruction is the imparting of information or techniques. With certain qualifications, this is a valid distinction, but this should not lead to any neglect of instruction. Instruction has to be provided, for without

the necessary information or techniques, the correct responses cannot be evoked. To take only one example. How can a child be expected to make a correct response to a foreigner if he has been given information which breeds hatred or contempt for foreign peoples? If the teaching of history and geography were reorientated, and if instead of laying the emphasis on clashes between societies, individuals and nations, the far-flung cooperation of man throughout the ages was brought out vividly, this would not only lay the foundation of a more creative education but also help to improve international understanding.

Gandhi held that the application of principles should proceed by stages from easy to more difficult cases. His principle that ends ought to be realized by persuasion rather than compulsion should therefore first be applied to resolve conflicts between individuals. Once the principle has succeeded in such individual cases, we can gradually extend the field of its application. This has the advantage that we gain in experience and confidence by handling easier cases in the initial stages. Gandhi himself sought to reform the individual in order to reform society, the society to reform the nation and the nation to reform the world.

Once experience and confidence have been gained by handling successfully many individual cases, the next step may be to apply the principle to the solution of internal tensions. There are large fields of possible application in the case of (a) labour troubles or (b) conflicts of minorities or groups within the nation. Such problems should be tackled before the principles and the techniques are applied to the most difficult field of human relations, viz. the field of international and inter-State conflicts of interest. The people within one State are more homogeneous and can understand one another better so that application of the techniques is easier and more likely to succeed. Another reason for starting with tensions within the community is that if persuasion does not succeed, there can be the resort to law or neutral arbitration. Resort to law or arbitration is easiest in the case of individuals, but can also be applied to organizations or interests within the State. In fact, one of the most striking developments in recent times has

been the steady extension of the operation of law and arbitration to cases concerning groups and organizations within the State. It may be expected that with increasing public awareness of the futility of violence and with growth in the power of the United Nations, the day will soon come when neutral arbitration will become increasingly operative among States as well.

Gandhi's principles also demand that there should be an intensification, both nationally and internationally, of schemes of social welfare. He knew that much of the tension in individuals and societies is created through a sense of frustration, and such frustration is due to the fact that people have no outlet for their creative energies. Individuals who are engaged in fruitful work are happy. The same applies to societies and States. If constructive programmes in which the energies of the people can be usefully employed are undertaken on an increasing scale, it will lead to a double benefit. On the one hand, the energies of individuals and nations will be utilized in creative programmes and leave no time or opportunity for their application to unsocial or anti-social ends. On the other, the wealth and welfare so created will help to raise the standard of life of the people and remove the sense of gnawing want which generates hatred among individuals and nations. Such programmes of social welfare will help to ease the tension within the individual, within the country and by extension of that principle also ease tensions among nations.

A corollary to such a programme would be to canalize all aid from one nation to another through international agencies. Aid that is bilateral is bound to be suspected, even if no strings are attached to it. One remembers the old proverb that if you want to make an enemy of your friend, make him your debtor. Not only should existing programmes of assistance be channelled through the United Nations but Uno should prepare a greatly enlarged programme of international help and development. Such programmes will help to heal many of the wounds which wars inflict. One recalls in this connection the splendid example of French workers who went to Germany and of German workers who went to France to rebuild ruined hospitals and schools. Such

programmes of reconstruction should not only be on a much larger scale but should be carried out in a concerted manner by the United Nations.

Inequality among individuals and nations is one of the causes of tension and hatred. Within the nation, the State seeks to minimize such inequality by a system of progressive taxation. In this way a doctrine of limits is established, and defines the field within which individuals can operate freely, but outside which, whether above or below, they are not allowed to go. The growing contacts among nations demand the application of a similar doctrine of limits among them so that the glaring inequalities of today are mitigated. Countries which have enforced the doctrine of limits for their citizens guarantee them the necessities of life. There is provision for universal education. The health services are there to look after the people's health. Unemployment benefits take care of those who have no jobs. There is a programme to provide accommodation for all. Even in countries which are not Welfare States, the gulf between the rich and the poor is being gradually bridged. It is thus a matter for consideration whether the time has not come to extend this principle to nations. The United Nations may try to lay down certain minimum standards—standards which should be guaranteed to all people, if necessary by persuading the more prosperous nations to share part of their surplus with their less fortunate fellows in other countries. There are certain fields in which this can be easily done. There are areas of the world which have a surplus of food while people in other areas starve. The United Nations could undertake to distribute the surplus in the deficit areas. There is today in many countries an acute shortage of paper. Text books cannot be prepared because of such shortage. When this issue was discussed in Unesco, it transpired that the United States alone could meet a great part of the world demand if only its Sunday papers were reduced by ten per cent. Americans would hardly feel the loss and yet the world as a whole would greatly gain.

It is a paradox of the modern age that the more the world is coming together through technological advance, the more are

States making travel difficult by imposing all sorts of control. Movement of goods has become increasingly difficult because of various restrictions. The result is that in spite of immense increase in the production of goods, there are areas which are denied their minimum needs. On the other hand, there are countries which do not know what to do with their surplus. Free trade would help to minimize such differences, but any such proposal is likely to provoke the opposition of vested interests and arouse strong feelings. A beginning may however be made with increased facilities of travel as a first step. So far as barriers to travel and communication are concerned, there is hardly any valid reason for them. The only ground for such restrictions is internal security but with all the barriers and restrictions that human ingenuity can devise, the people whom a State wants to keep out generally get in, and those whom it wants to keep in equally often get out. Not all the passports and visas shut out the spies and agents and smugglers who operate on an international scale. It is only the bona-fide traveller who is put to difficulties by customs, regulations, visas, currency restrictions and passports. The relaxation of barriers to travel and communication as a first step towards ultimate removal of all barriers to movement of men and goods would be one of the logical developments of the acceptance of Gandhian principles and may well be the first step towards applying it to international problems.

The demand for facility of travel and communication may seem a small thing, but in fact it would be a great step forward. It may be a great solvent of international tensions, for more travel would mean more personal contacts and more friendships among people of different regions. One of the main reasons of national hatreds is lack of contacts. It is common experience that whatever is familiar is accepted easily. Some of the dislike or distrust of foreigners is due to lack of familiarity. Further, when individuals come into contact, they know one another as persons with personal qualities and faults. Before such contact, they think of foreigners as members of a class or category. It is natural to think of people of other countries in abstract terms. Men easily hate

abstractions but do not so readily hate individuals. The more people come together and the more barriers are removed, the greater will be the possibility of creating international understanding and of lessening tensions by developing personal relationships among individuals of different nations.

A further extension of the Gandhian technique to problems of international tensions would be the organization of a front of peace-loving nations. Its membership should be open to anybody who accepts its objectives without any mental reservation. There need be only two conditions to be fulfilled for membership. The first condition should be that nations who seek to join the peace front must give up hate propaganda against another country. Their right to criticise would still remain, but they must give up the right to vilify. At present, propaganda often degenerates into abuse. The elimination of abuse and hatred can alone be evidence of the pacific intention of a State.

The second condition would be that States which wish to join this peace front must allow the free circulation of an impartial newspaper to be published by the front. The newspaper would report facts objectively. One difficulty in the present-day world is that people cannot get at the facts. Many newspapers publish coloured versions in order to increase sales, oblivious of the fact that all sensational news tends to excite passions. News is distorted to further the interests of particular groups. An objective and neutral paper would be a very powerful instrument for fighting passions and promoting the cause of peace. It could be published under the auspices of the United Nations, and to ensure that it is truly objective it should be edited by an International Board of Editors. All facts should be reported but without bitterness or violence. Where there is difference of opinion as to what are the facts, the different versions should be printed side by side but without comments and eliminating as far as possible all subjective bias and prejudice.

The question may be asked as to how such a newspaper is to be financed. Obviously, it cannot depend on subsidies by national States or even on advertisements, for that would restrict its

freedom. Nor can it expect a wide circulation at the start. It can be published under the auspices of the United Nations by levying a small cess on those who join the peace front. The contribution of a nation to Uno is not perhaps even one per cent of its national budget. If one per cent of the contribution to the United Nations is earmarked for the proposed paper, it would suffice. Since no State likes to admit that it is warlike or aggressive, it is probable that all States will join the front and allow the circulation of the paper within their territories. This may not appear to be a very striking proposal but there is little doubt that if carried out, it would remove one of the major causes of international mistrust and hatred.

Gandhi believed in the individual. He also believed that the smallest beginning may lead to the most far-reaching results. The Gandhian technique is therefore specially suited for operation by small groups and through programmes which are initially modest. He believed that the means are as important as the end and that a handful of men can change the course of history by the adoption of pure methods. All such changes must however start in the realm of the spirit and conform to the ideals of truth, not only because truth alone ultimately prevails but because victory would not be worth while even if it could be achieved otherwise.

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